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## *The life of st. Lewis Bertrand*

Luis Bertrán (st.)



600052385T













**BEATVS LVDOVICVS BERTRANDVS ORD. PRÆD.**

210. 0. 500





THE LIFE  
OF  
ST. LEWIS BERTRAND,  
*FRIAR PREACHER OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC,  
AND APOSTLE OF NEW GRANADA.*

BY  
FATHER BERTRAND WILBERFORCE,  
*OF THE SAME ORDER.*

Illustrated by  
CYRIL JAMES DAVENPORT,  
*OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.*

"When thou shalt think thyself consumed, thou shalt rise as the Day Star."  
—JOB xi. 17.



LONDON: BURNS AND OATES.  
1882.





Stanford's Geog. Estab.





**In Loving Memory**

OF

*MY FATHER AND MOTHER,*

TO WHOSE GENEROUS SELF-SACRIFICE AND READY OBEDIENCE

TO GOD'S CALL

THEIR CHILDREN OWE, A TREASURE BETTER THAN LIFE,

THE PRICELESS GIFT

OF THE

*HOLY CATHOLIC FAITH,*

FOR WHICH ST. LEWIS LABOURED SO STRENUOUSLY

AND SO ARDENTLY DESIRED TO DIE.

**May they rest in peace.**





### Approbation.

*Having read, by order of Superiors, a book by the Rev. Father Bertrand Wilberforce, of our Order, entitled, "LIFE OF ST. LEWIS BERTRAND," we have found in it nothing to prevent its publication.*

FR. PAUL UTILI, O.P. S.T.M.

FR. RAYMUND PALMER, O.P.

**Nihil Obstat :**

FR. G. VINCENTIUS KING, O.P.,  
*Prior Provincialis Ord. Præd. Ang.*

**Imprimatur :**

HENRICUS EDUARDUS,  
*Card. Archiep., Westmon.*

## P R E F A C E.

---

THIS is the first time, as far as I am aware, that the Life of St. Lewis Bertrand has appeared in English. It was hoped that it would have been ready for publication last year, as the third centenary of the Saint's death occurred on the 9th of October 1881. But the pressure of other duties rendered this impossible.

The record of a saintly career is, however, never inopportune, and as that of St. Lewis unfolds one more page of the grand history of the missionary life of the Catholic Church, it cannot be without interest to any who love the Faith and desire the extension of God's Kingdom.

Nothing more therefore need be said by way of preface, than briefly to indicate the sources from which the facts related in this work have been drawn.

In a Spanish Catalogue in the British Museum as many as fourteen different histories of St. Lewis Bertrand appear, a fact which shows the veneration entertained for him in his native country. But none of these lives are found in the library of the Museum.

The Bollandist Editors, however, lend their invaluable assistance, and we have to thank them for being particularly generous to St. Lewis; for they give in full two of the best

Spanish lives translated into Latin, besides the ordinary commentary and the Bull of Canonisation.

From these lives most of the facts here related concerning the Saint have been drawn. As they are both of high authority, and agree so perfectly together that the Bollandist Editor declares that comment is hardly necessary, we can rely upon their accurate statement of facts with more than ordinary confidence.

The first of these lives was written exactly three hundred years ago, being published in 1581 and 1582, with additions in 1583, by Father Vincent Justinian Antist, a Dominican Friar, who enjoyed the advantage of a long and intimate personal friendship with the Saint. Father Antist joined the Order in the Convent of St. Dominic in Valencia in the year 1560, thus being for some time a novice under St. Lewis. Diago, in his history of the Province of Aragon, praises Father Antist as a religious of high merit. He was a man of considerable talent, and was the author of various works on philosophy and theology. His devotion to the Saints of the Order of St. Dominic was proved by the diligence with which he wrote the lives of St. Vincent Ferrer, St. Lewis Bertrand, Blessed Peter Gonzalez, and a treatise on the Mystical Wounds of St. Catherine of Siena.

Father Antist was evidently a man of the utmost sincerity and honesty of purpose, and no one could read his life of St. Lewis, without being impressed with the earnestness of his desire to state nothing about which he was not certain. To quote his own words of simple-hearted piety: "God knows how strenuously I have laboured to speak, in this work, the pure truth unmingled with falsehood. One consideration that impels me to take especial care is the fear that if I were to add the sin of falsehood to my other many

transgressions, I might provoke the wrath of God to punish me; and I am furthermore moved to be cautious, because I have no desire to obtain any profit from my work in this world, but my object is to secure the saintly soul, about whom I write, as my intercessor with the most Holy Trinity. From this it may be easily concluded how careful I must have been not to say anything displeasing to him, for we well know that the Blessed in Heaven are participators in the attributes of God, and therefore intensely abhor all false praise; flattery gives them no pleasure, but is most detestable in their eyes."

Father Antist governed the important Convent of St. Dominic, in Valencia, for some time as Prior, and died the death of the just in the same convent in the year 1599.

The second life of the Saint was written by Father Bartholomew Aviñone, a Master of Theology of the Order of St. Dominic, who was elected by the Convent of Valencia as Procurator to promote the cause of the canonisation of St. Lewis. Echard, in his work on the writers of the Dominican Order, says that Aviñone wrote, in the Spanish language, the most accurate of all the lives of St. Lewis Bertrand. The work was translated into Italian, and published in Rome in 1623. Aviñone had the advantage of reading the lives published by Antist and by Father Roca, who wrote in Valencia, when St. Lewis was declared Blessed by Paul V. in 1608. Besides these authorities, he had, as Procurator of the Cause, an intimate acquaintance with the accurate and voluminous Processes drawn up for the Canonisation.

There are also French lives of St. Lewis, the best of which, as far as I have seen, is that by Father John Baptist Feuillet, of the Dominican Province of Toulouse and

Apostolic Missionary in the West Indies, published at Paris in 1671.

Other authorities are mentioned in the course of the work, as occasion requires.

The engravings are by Mr. Cyril J. Davenport, of the British Museum, and my warmest thanks are due to him for his kindness in undertaking the work. The frontispiece is reproduced with admirable skill from the copy, in the old edition of the Bollandists, of the portrait sent from Valencia, considered at the time to be a faithful likeness of St. Lewis.

My thanks are also due to the Rev. Father Francisco Llopart, S.J., of Valencia, and to the Rev. Father M. Augustin Roze, a French Dominican, for information kindly supplied connected with the work.

ST. DOMINIC'S CONVENT, HAVERSTOCK HILL,  
LONDON, *April* 1882.



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# CHRONOLOGY OF THE LIFE OF ST. LEWIS.

	Contemporary Popes.	England.	Spain.
<p>Born, January 1, 1526.  Enters Religion, August 26, 1544.  Professed, August 27, 1545.  Ordained Priest, 1547.  Went to Lombay, 1548.  Returned to Valencia, November 1548.  Made Novice Master, 1551.  Made Vicar of St. Ann's, 1557.  Returned to Valencia, 1560.  Went to South America, 1562.  Returned to Spain, October 18, 1569.  Prior of Convent of St. Onuphrius, October 1570.  Returns as Novice Master to Valencia, October 1573.  Prior of St. Dominic's, Valencia, May 15, 1575.  Office expires, May 15, 1578.  Preaches Lent at Xativa, 1580.  Last sermon, Epiphany, 1581.  Went to God, October 9, 1581.  Body found incorrupt, 1582, 1647, 1661.  Beatified by Paul V., July 29, 1608.  Canonised by Clement X., April 12, 1671.</p>	<p>Adrian VI., 1533.  Clement II., 1534.  Paul III., 1549.  Julius III., 1555.  Marcellus II., 1555.  Paul IV., 1559.  Pius IV., 1565.  St. Pius V., 1572.</p>	<p>Henry VIII.,  17th year of his reign.]    Henry VIII.,  died, 1547.  Edward VI.,  died, 1553.    Mary crowned, 1553;  died, 1558.  Elizabeth, 1558.</p>	<p>Charles V., Emperor  of Germany and  King of Spain.    Phillip II., 1555.</p>

## Part I.

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### *THE PREPARATION.*

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“Trust in God, and stay in thy place. For it is easy in the eyes of God on a sudden to make the poor man rich.”—ECCLESIASTICUS xi. 22, 23.

“This man is a vessel of election to me, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my Name’s sake.”—ACTS ix. 15, 16.



# ST. LEWIS BERTRAND.

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"When thou shalt think thyself consumed, thou shalt rise as the day-star."—JOB xi. 17.


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## CHAPTER I.

### BIRTHPLACE AND TIMES OF THE SAINT.

Description of Valencia—The Huerta—Moorish Influence—The Cid—Painters—Christian Associations—Saints of the Sixteenth Century—St. Lewis Bertrand.

"The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof: the world and all they that dwell therein."—PSALM xxiii. 1.

N the eastern coast of the Spanish Peninsula, where the waters of the Guadalaviar mingle with the blue waves of the Mediterranean, stands the ancient city of Valencia. The surrounding country is one vast and delicious garden, often called the Eden of Spain, where nature, as if grateful for the soft and genial climate, seems to revel, by the assistance of man's industry, in the display of every variety of beauty.

The city stands about three miles from the seashore, in the midst of an extensive plain which, continually baked by the rays of the southern sun, would have been an arid

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desert but for the irrigation which has changed it into the celebrated "Huerta," or garden, rich with a luxurious vegetation almost equal to a tropical climate. "The magnificent Huerta," to quote the words of one who has seen it, and is able to appreciate and describe what he has seen, "is bounded almost on all sides, except towards the sea, by picturesque ranges of mountains, and studded with villages, with their churches and towers; such a number of farms and thatched cottages, white and glittering in the sun, that the whole plain seems one vast village planted with carob-trees, poplars, mulberries, prickly pears, olives, and some few palm-trees."

The sandy bed of the river Guadalaviar or Turia, is generally, except during periods of floods, almost dry when it reaches Valencia, on account of the immense quantity of water drawn from it by the eight principal canals by which the Huerta is irrigated. From these eight canals the water—the life-blood of the soil—is carried with admirable skill into every part of the plain by a perfect network of smaller channels. This ancient system of artificial irrigation is a valuable relic of the Moorish occupation of the kingdom, forming one of the chief features of the country; and "the fertile regions, intersected by a thousand canals bordered with flowers, present a most interesting spectacle to the traveller. Every field with its principal canal and its numberless ramifications exhibits, in some measure, a miniature representation of the whole province. The earth is clothed with verdure and with flowers; everything flourishes with fresh and charming luxuriance; and the crystal streamlets wind with soft murmurs among the shady trees." \*

Among these trees the carob or agarrobo is one of the finest as well as the most useful. It grows to a considerable height, and its branches spread several hundred feet in

\* Christian Fisher's Picture of Valencia.

circumference ; and as it is often found in large groups, forming with its intersecting branches a natural vaulting of green foliage of different hues, it is one of the most picturesque features of the verdant Huerta.

The country around Valencia is thickly populated, and the whole plain is covered with villages, each with its church-tower gleaming through the leaves, and with white cottage farms sparkling in the sun. "Sometimes," says Mr. Hoskins, "more imposing edifices are distinguishable ; but generally the buildings are cottages, myriads of little white specks in a field of verdure, as countless as are the stars which in these cloudless skies are visible at night."

The industry of the people is immense. Work in the Huerta is incessant. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise, if man is in any way to keep pace with nature and avail himself of one-half her liberality, since each season is distinguished by four or five different crops, and every month brings with it new seed-times and new harvests. Where else are there meadows which may be mown every week during eight months of the year, and fields that must be ploughed nine or ten times ?

In the midst of this fertile plain, a fair picture, indeed, in its hilly frame, with its shining canals, its brilliant flowers, its glistening villages, its palms and fruit trees, appear the towers and bright-tiled domes of ancient Valencia. The approaches to the city are fine, and the gates are guarded by high battlemented towers of Moorish origin and architecture. The old part of the city—that standing in the sixteenth century—is formed of extremely narrow and tortuous streets, the lofty houses looking from some distance like one immense mass of building. Thus Valencia has an Eastern look, the height of the houses and the narrowness of the streets being protections against the power of the sun, which has not in that southern clime the veil of cloud to which our northern eye is accustomed.



From the belfry of the Cathedral, a Gothic tower rising to a considerable height above the city, a charming view of the whole surrounding country may be obtained; and whether the eye turns to the glittering expanse of the Huerta and rests on the distant hills, or follows the silver thread of the river trickling over its sandy bed to the Mediterranean which stretches along the horizon, meeting everywhere a garden on its banks, a scene is presented that in its own style cannot be surpassed, and when once witnessed can never be forgotten. Any one fortunate enough to see it can realise the old proverb, that in fair Valencia a Jew might forget Jerusalem; and can understand why the Arab poet called it a terrestrial Paradise, and the Moors the City of Mirth.

But Valencia has attractions of other kinds than the natural beauties with which it is surrounded. It is full of historical associations of various descriptions, so that the points of interest to be found within its walls and in its neighbourhood will widely differ according to the taste and ideas of the visitor. Some derive most pleasure in admiring the many traces still remaining of the ancient Moorish domination beginning as early as the eighth century. To this period, to the industry and skill of the Moors, the country owes the canals and rivulets which fertilise the Huerta, the city its walls of tapia work, lately destroyed, the people their Eastern manners and gay costumes.

To the minds of others the fine ancient portals and the narrow tortuous streets, into which the genial breezes of the south waft the perfume of the orange groves, conjure up all the romantic stories about the chivalrous Cid, Ruy Diaz de Bivar, who, conquering the city in 1098, after a siege of ten months, reigned as despotic sovereign till his death. Spanish poetry abounds in romances about this half-fabulous hero, the Cid of Valencia.

Others confine their attention simply to the paintings of the Valencian schools of art scattered in the churches, or collected into galleries from the desecrated cloisters and convents. The eye of the artist is charmed with the works of Vicente Juanes, the truly Christian painter, who, like Fra Angelico himself, left in his pictures the sublime records of his own sacred meditations, the sights and thoughts of his mental prayer. His pictures of our Blessed Lord are described as clothed with a beauty more than human, radiant with an expression of love and holiness, of sweetness, yet of dignity, that appears to be rather infused by the Creator Spirit Himself than to be the result of mere human genius. Almost rivalling these magnificent works are the delicately finished pictures of the Friar artist of the sixteenth century—Nicolas Borrás, and the speaking figures of Ribalta.

But to those who have the faith, Valencia brings other thoughts, and is clothed with most attractive associations. The Cathedral tower, the ancient domes crowning buildings that once were convents peopled with religious of every profession, speak of the glories of the Church of Spain, and bring to mind the days when the regular orders flourished and produced champions of the faith in every city of the Peninsula. What Catholic who has read the life of St. Vincent Ferrer could look unmoved at the Church of St. Stephen, where stands the font at which St. Vincent was baptized, at the pulpits and squares in which he preached, at the city gates through which he entered in triumph, the whole population pouring out to meet him, while every tower of the city rocked with the pealing bells, and the narrow streets were bright with lights, and the quaint balconies clothed with many-coloured tapestry in honour of the wonder-working apostle, Valencia's greatest son?

And who can enter the ancient Cathedral, though its architecture has been debased by the tasteless improve-

ments of last century, without a thrill of emotion, as his memory carries him back to the sixteenth century and recalls the venerable form of the Augustinian Archbishop St. Thomas of Villanova? Before that high altar, once shining with exquisite silver work, St. Thomas used to kneel in contemplation, and in that choir he often sat enthroned among his canons. The Cathedral itself is venerable for its antiquity, occupying, as it does, the site of an old Roman temple ; and as twice in its history it has been a Mahometan mosque, it is a standing evidence of the triumph of Christ over the heathen world, and of His Cross over the Crescent.

Thus, to those who possess the priceless gift of faith, there are in Valencia other and higher interests than those generally noted by English travellers, the brightness of the climate, the richness of the verdure, the variegated domes and the Moorish gateways. Those who can appreciate spiritual beauty can here conjure up old pictures more attractive even than those of Juanes and Ribalta, and can discover in the associations with which the churches and ruined convents abound a fragrance more exquisite than the perfume of the orange groves and the gardens of the Alameda.

It is true that the heart is saddened by the thought that the religious orders have been suppressed ; that the stately abbeys, the ancient priories and convents, with their vast and magnificent churches in which for so many centuries the praise of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity was chanted day and night throughout the length and breadth of Spain, have been desecrated, and stand in mournful emptiness, or have been destroyed. From these ancient homes of sanctity and learning the religious have been expelled in the sacred name of Liberty by the modern revolution.

But however deeply we may lament this destruction, past experience assures us that the all-wise Providence of God overrules the waywardness of men for the purification and

renewing of His Church. Without claiming the gift of prophecy, it is easy to foretell that the day will certainly arrive when the prayers of Catholic Spain will triumph, the suppressed orders will return, if not to their old convents, at least to their old work, for the glory of God and the salvation of souls.

In the meantime it is a consolation to paint from old chronicles the pictures of past times, of those days of which a poet says—

“ The days of old were days of might,  
In forms of greatness moulded ;  
And flowers of heaven grew on the earth,  
Within the Church unfolded.”

And certainly the merest glance at the Church in the eventful sixteenth century convinces us that those were days of might and power, both for weal and for woe, for Satan and for God ; and that the heroes of sanctity, whose names are now emblazoned on the Church's sacred rolls and are household words in the mouths of her children, were in very truth “in forms of greatness moulded.” Among them St. Lewis Bertrand holds an illustrious rank. He was one, among many saints, who at that momentous period in various countries and different ways, by prayer and intercession, suffering and penance, preaching the Word of God and teaching sacred science, as pontiffs, missionaries, founders, as trusty rulers of the Church and intrepid martyrs for the ancient faith, preserved that faith in great measure in the Old World and planted it in vast regions of the newly-discovered continent.

That sixteenth century, only now in England slowly beginning to be truly appreciated, as truth gradually dethrones fable, commenced a new epoch in the world's history. The Ages of Faith, as they are called, were drawing to a close. Men's minds were in a ferment. The time of the rebellion,

foretold by the Apostle, appeared to have arrived, and the right of private judgment concerning revealed dogma, and of free thought which was afterwards to develop into complete infidelity, was openly advocated in Europe. In England the State triumphed over the Church, robbed its sanctuaries, pillaged its shrines, severed the country from the unity of the Church, and established a legal Church which survives to this day as a department of the State. A tempest of heresy raged on the Continent, and men's minds were agitated by many various winds of doctrine.

In the midst of these terrific storms it is wonderful to trace how visibly the right hand of the Most High protected His Church. When her enemies prophesied her complete destruction, on a sudden her youth was renewed like the eagle. Already had she triumphed over many enemies and battled through many tempests. She had conquered the heathen world and stood unshaken amidst the ruins of the Roman Empire. She had survived the insidious dangers of the Arian heresy and maintained her authority against the encroachments of the German Emperors, and now, unchanging and unchangeable, she manifested her divine vitality by her readiness to meet the assaults of the enemy in his new array. A mighty army of saints uprose in the cause of God and rallied around the undying Church, their Mother. New orders and congregations were founded to defend the truth and spread the faith, and many of these heroic servants of God can be claimed as her offspring by Spain. St. Ignatius and St. Francis Borgia, from Spain, fought in company with the Italian St. Philip and St. Charles.

Nor were the ancient orders of the Church unmindful of their duty. They also rallied to the fight. Whilst the Carthusians were being martyred in England for the true faith, the ancient orders all over Europe renewed their early fervour, and provided the Church with holy pontiffs and

bishops, with contemplative saints and learned theologians, with zealous preachers and undaunted missionaries. Very many of these were of Spanish birth. St. Teresa and St. John of the Cross renewed the rigours of Carmel; St. Thomas of Villanova governed the See of Valencia like a true son of St. Augustine; St. Peter of Alcantara and Blessed Nicolas Factor reminded men of the days of St. Francis; while the Friar Preachers of St. Dominic could point among many others to Lewis of Granada, and Bartholomew of the Martyrs, the Archbishop of Braga, to St. Lewis Bertrand, and in Italy to St. Pius V, the patron of our late venerated Pontiff.

Some of this mighty army of saintly warriors for God and the truth were destined, like St. Pius and St. Ignatius, St. Philip and St. Charles, to stem the torrent of heresy in Europe; others, like St. Francis Xavier and St. Lewis Bertrand, to win for Christ and His Church new children in remote nations, to compensate for those lost in Europe.

The history of St. Lewis Bertrand, although he lived during the period of the so-called Reformation, will in no way introduce the great public events which were then taking place in Europe. His days were passed in the quiet cloisters of his convent home in Valencia, far removed from the religious troubles convulsing so many countries, except for the seven years during which he was hidden in the forests of the South American continent, labouring in secret for God. Yet who can estimate the effect lives of prayer and sacrifice such as his may have exercised in the interests of the Church and of souls in far-distant lands, in events the most public and important!

## CHAPTER II.

### FAMILY OF THE SAINT.

The Family House—Ancestors—Kin to St. Vincent Ferrer—Character of John Bertrand—Heavenly Favours—Carthusians—Second Marriage—Birth of the Saint—His Brothers and Sisters.

“Behold, O Lord, Thou hast known all things, the last and those of old : Thou hast formed me and laid Thy Hand upon me.”—PSALM cxxxviii. 5.

**I**N the beginning of the sixteenth century an old family house, situated in one of the narrow Valencian streets between the Cathedral and the river, was inhabited by a worthy citizen called Juan Beltran, or, to give the name its usual English form, John Bertrand. He followed the profession of a Notary public, and being a man of upright principles and well-known integrity, his name stood high in the city.

The quaint old house stood in the “Plaza del Almudín,” near the residence of the chief officer of the public revenue. How long the family had resided there does not appear, but the name was an ancient one in Valencia, and the private records John Bertrand could have shown us, proved that his ancestors had held many offices and discharged from time to time public duties of trust and importance ; in fact, that the name of Bertrand was often mentioned with honour in the annals of the city.

Valencia was not always as it is in modern times, a mere province forming part of the kingdom of Spain. Like England in Anglo-Saxon times, Spain was formerly divided into separate kingdoms ; so that in ancient days the city

had the dignity of a capital and was the seat of government. The kingdom comprised the provinces of Valencia, Alicante, and Castellon de la Plana. In the sixteenth century it was attached to the Crown of Aragon, and governed by a Viceroy. Considerable disturbances took place in 1519, the year in which Charles V. was elected Emperor, and increased two years afterwards, when that monarch favoured the popular cause, in consequence of the refusal of the Valencian nobles to acknowledge him unless he consented to hold the Cortes in person in their capital. What part John Bertrand took in these troublesome and disastrous affairs does not appear, but many years later his son Lewis was consulted about certain grave difficulties that were their lamentable results.

It stood recorded in the annals of Valencia, that when in the fifteenth century there was a dispute concerning the succession to the throne of Aragon, a member of the Bertrand family had been selected as one of the judges to arbitrate on the question. This honourable distinction St. Lewis little esteemed, but there was another that he, in common with his father and the whole household, valued as a privilege of the highest order and considered as a precious inheritance. Their family was near akin to that of St. Vincent Ferrer. To understand fully the honour of this relationship it would be necessary to be a Valencian of the sixteenth century. St. Lewis certainly, and probably all his pious family, prized this connection with the great patron of Valencia more than any distinction of worldly rank ; they would not have exchanged it for a pedigree longer and more noble than that of the proudest grandee of the kingdom.

The character which this good notary had acquired in Valencia was that of a just, honourable, and upright man ; and uniting these qualities with considerable skill in business affairs, he naturally attracted the affection and esteem of his fellow-citizens. The highest families of Valencia were among his clients, and they lived on such close terms of



personal intimacy with him, and entertained so strong a feeling of respect for his character, that he was commonly known among them as "The Father." He was also frequently employed in affairs of importance by the Sacred Office, and acted for many years as lay-procurator for a convent of Carthusian monks, called the Portacæli, situated about four leagues from Valencia.

Nor did his religious fall short of his natural character. He was a devout Christian, delighting in the society of religious persons, and always continued fervent and exact in the duties of religion. His most intimate friends could never remember hearing him utter an angry expression, and this self-restraint enabled him to be just and fair towards all in his professional dealings.

Being of the family of St. Vincent Ferrer, he naturally felt himself under the special patronage of that Saint, but his love and confidence were much increased by a favour received very early in life by means of Vincent's intercession. While still a little child, some gunpowder with which he was playing accidentally exploded in his face, burning and disfiguring him in a terrible manner. At the sight of the child's danger his aunt Ursula Ferrer went immediately to the Dominican Church, and prostrating herself before the altar of St. Vincent, besought him with many tears to preserve the life of her little nephew. On her return home she found her prayer answered, for all dangerous symptoms had disappeared in spite of the severity of the injuries.

Nor was this favour the only one for which John Bertrand was indebted to the intercession of St. Vincent. Some years after his first marriage he was visited by a long and severe illness, which during Holy Week reduced him to the utmost extremity. On Wednesday in Holy Week his friends, momentarily expecting his death, had even begun to make the necessary arrangements for his

funeral, when suddenly the dying man revived and expressed his intention of going at once to the Matins and Lauds at the parish church. They naturally thought him delirious, and endeavoured to calm his mind; but he replied quietly, "I am in my right mind. St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Bruno have declared to me in a vision that it is not according to God's will that I should die in this illness, and that this very day I am to be present at the office of Tenebræ in the church." He thereupon arose perfectly restored to health and went at once to the church.

This remarkable cure rendered him doubly careful to lead a fervent Christian life, and inspired him with ardent devotion to the two Saints who had been the messengers of God's mercy; for he considered this signal favour to have been the fruit of their loving and powerful intercession. His affection for the Carthusian monks of Portacæli also increased with his veneration for their founder; and after Leo X. had granted permission for the Feast of St. Bruno to be celebrated in that monastery, John Bertrand always spent the festival at Portacæli, and did not forget the temporal needs of the house. In 1546 he offered several valuable prizes to those who composed the best hymns, either in Latin or Spanish, in honour of St. Bruno.

At the death of his first wife he conceived an ardent desire to become a Carthusian himself, in order to devote the remainder of his life to prayer and penance in the monastery of Portacæli. But God had other designs for him, intending him to be the father of a Saint. On his way to the Carthusians to demand the habit of religion, he was once more favoured by a vision of St. Bruno and St. Vincent Ferrer, who assured him that God did not intend him to become a monk, that he was to marry a second time, and to serve the Divine Majesty in the world. Although he did not then understand that he was destined

to be the father of a Saint, he joyfully bowed to this unmistakable manifestation of God's will, and returning home in peace, settled down once more to the duties of his profession. St. Lewis himself used to excite the devotion of his fellow-religious to St. Vincent Ferrer, by relating these marvellous instances of the power of his intercession.

In due time John Bertrand celebrated his second marriage, and chose for his wife one admirably suited to be the mother of the Saint God was about to bestow upon the Church. This was a lady named Jane Angela Exarch,\* whom Aviñone describes as a woman of high religious principle, who loved the retirement of her own house, which she rarely left except to attend the public services or to make private visits to the church. She frequented no society except that of a few chosen persons who encouraged her in the service of God, her most intimate friends being some devout women who dwelt together near the Church of St. Andrew.

Her mild and peaceful temper enabled her to live in harmony with her husband, and her virtues rendered her home the model of a Christian household. This second marriage cemented more closely than ever the friendship existing between John Bertrand and the Carthusians of Portacæli, for his wife's brother was a member of the Community, and for many years governed the monastery as Prior, with a high reputation for sanctity.

The fruit of this second marriage was a family of eight children, four boys and four girls, of whom the eldest was

\* There is some difference among the biographers of the Saint about the spelling of this lady's name. The Auditors of the Rota in their report say, "St. Lewis Bertrand was born of pious Catholic parents, John Lewis Bertrand and Joanna Angela de los Exarches." The Spanish and Italian lives for "de los Exarches" read Essarca or Exarch as Roca. In the Bull of canonisation she is called Joanna Anna Exarch.

St. Lewis. He was born on New Year's Day, the Feast of the Circumcision of our Blessed Lord, in the year 1526.\* Perhaps the special devotion he afterwards had to the holy name of Jesus may partly have arisen from the fact of his birthday falling on that feast.

On the very day of his birth, according to the pious custom of Catholic countries, he was carried to the parish church of St. Stephen, and received the Sacrament of Regeneration at the same font in which St. Vincent Ferrer had been baptized.

He received in baptism the name of John Lewis, after his father, but was called by his second name Lewis, and after entering religion, he was commonly known by his surname, and addressed as Friar Bertrand.

Nothing remarkable is recorded of the infancy of St. Lewis except the frequency of his tears. He was a fretful child, and nothing seemed to comfort him except the sight of the holy images in the churches. Often when every device had failed to make him cheerful, his nurse would carry her little charge to some church and show him the pictures and images ; and this not only quieted his piteous cries, but seemed to fill his infant soul with a peculiar joy.

This fretfulness no doubt arose from ill-health, from which the Saint suffered all his life ; but as nothing happens by chance or without some design in God's overruling providence, the simple piety of his early biographers makes them see in it an indication that he was intended, like another Jeremias, to weep and lament over the sins of men, and to find consolation in spiritual things alone.

Of the three younger brothers and four sisters of St. Lewis, little is recorded except the few following facts.

Michael Jerome, the second son, became a secular priest,

\* Henry VIII. first presented his petition for the divorce of Queen Catherine, to Clement VII., in 1527. It is interesting to note how many Saints were raised up to counteract the evils of the Reformation.

and was appointed to an honourable position connected with the Cathedral Chapter of Valencia. He was highly respected by all classes in the city, and died in June 1594, in his sixty-third year, thus surviving his elder brother as much as thirteen years. His body was buried, with those of his parents, in the Dominican Church, near the shrine of St. Lewis.

The third son followed his eldest brother into the Order of St. Dominic, and in the year 1551 was professed by the Prior of Valencia, having passed his noviciate under the guidance of St. Lewis. After his profession he was sent to the famous schools of Bologna, in which city is the tomb of St. Dominic, and after his course of study, as he was returning home to Valencia he was overtaken by a violent storm, and cast ashore on the coast of the island of Sardinia. The fatigue and exposure occasioned by this wreck permanently injured his health, and he died of fever not long after, in the arms of his brethren, in the Priory of Cagliari, the capital of Sardinia.

The only layman of the family was the youngest son, James, who seems to have inherited the good and amiable qualities which distinguished his father. He occupied with credit many posts under Government, and was lastly appointed chief officer of the revenue, and discharged the duties of this responsible office with fidelity and justice. Like his father, he was ever a pious and God-fearing man. He married a lady named Maria Costa, an enthusiastic admirer of St. Lewis, and by her had one daughter, who was united in marriage to Peter Escrava. James Bertrand died in the same year as his elder brother Michael, 1594, and was laid in the family burial-place.

Of the four sisters of St. Lewis nothing more is recorded than that three married and settled in the city of Valencia. The youngest died at an early age.

## CHAPTER III.

### BOYHOOD OF ST. LEWIS.

School—Early Character—Midnight Prayer—Father Ambrose of Jesus—  
Lewis leaves Home as a Pilgrim—His Letter to his Parents—Returns  
Home—Assumes Ecclesiastical Dress—Authorities for this Portion of  
the Life.

"It is good for a man, when he hath borne the yoke from his youth."—  
LAMENTATIONS iii. 27.

**A**LMIGHTY GOD is often pleased to adorn with very singular graces the childhood of those chosen souls whom He destines to be examples of holiness to all Christians ; and though nothing miraculous is related of the early life of St. Lewis, he gave from his tenderest years remarkable signs of virtue. His boyhood was a prophecy of his after-life. He dedicated himself to the service of God when first the light of reason dawned upon his mind ; and from that moment he never allowed himself to relax in his efforts after perfection. His school-life began at a very early age, and we may gather how diligent must have been his application from the fact that he began to say the Office of Our Lady before he was eight years old. In this pious practice he persevered until the end of his life.

As he grew older he was noticed to be very silent and of a retiring disposition. He seldom spoke unless the conversation turned upon spiritual matters, when his interest was at once aroused ; and if any of his companions used indecorous language, or wasted their time in idleness, he

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would sweetly and gently reprove them for the fault. This precocious virtue, though distinguishing him from most children, did not make him repulsive or provoking to others, because it sprung from the grace of God, and was unmixed with affectation and conceit. He was full of sweet and meek humility—the fruit of the Holy Ghost, which tempered any natural seriousness of character; and if he reproved others, his own obedience and submission were a conspicuous example to all.

The genuine spirit of devotion that filled his innocent soul was evident from the care which he took to conceal what he did for God. As early as possible in the evening he was accustomed to shut himself up in his own bedroom, but instead of going to rest he would spend sometimes the greater part of the night in prayer. This was discovered by the servants, who used often to watch him through the crevices of the door.

When thoroughly overcome with fatigue he would lie down on a large wooden chest or on the bare ground, taking care however to disturb his bed, in order that it might appear as if he had rested there in comfort. From a love of mortification also he would scarcely ever eat anything in the morning, to accustom himself to fasting; and though the climate of Spain no doubt rendered these mortifications less injurious to health than they might be in more northern latitudes, still we can judge from them how great must have been that early love of penance inspired into his soul by the Spirit of God.

It is almost needless to say that he was the comfort of his parents' lives, and far from provoking them to anger by waywardness or disobedience, if his mother amidst the annoyances and trials of daily life seemed inclined to impatience, Lewis would modestly ask her to allow him to read some pious book aloud, thus soothing the irritation of her mind.

To hear Mass and to be present at Vespers were the chief pleasures of his boyhood, and his favourite church, which he often visited three times in the day, was that attached to the Priory of St. Dominic. Many would look back to watch the boy passing so modestly through the streets with downcast eyes and recollected look, or wonder who that child could be who knelt so long with devout attitude and fixed attention before the altar.

The guide to whose care God intrusted the early years of the Saint was a venerable religious of the Order of the Minims of St. Francis of Paula, named Father Ambrose of Jesus. Lewis at a very early age chose this holy man as his confessor and director in the spiritual life, and being so humble and obedient he soon made considerable progress towards perfection. Father Ambrose was distinguished by his devotion to the holy Name of Jesus, and one of the first practices he taught his young disciple was to have that adorable Name deeply engraven on his heart, and constantly to repeat it with devout intention. How many graces of his boyhood and of the more mature sanctity of later years may be traced to that practice, so simple yet so efficacious, of repeating constantly the ejaculations, "Blessed be the Name of Jesus !" "My beloved Jesus, be ever in my heart !"

Another important lesson of Christian perfection that Lewis learnt from Father Ambrose was a self-sacrificing love of others, a virtue he afterwards was called upon to practise in so eminent a way as a missionary in the New World. When still quite a boy he obtained permission to visit and nurse the sick in the hospitals of the city. Often, when not more than fourteen, he would spend the whole night in these charitable works, tending the sick with the utmost care, and striving to satisfy all their wants.

Father Ambrose of Jesus was himself a religious of



more than ordinary virtue, so that his example was even more powerful than his words of exhortation. He was a man much given to prayer and the exercises of the contemplative life, while at the same time he was renowned as an apostolic preacher. His zeal for souls was so earnest that he begged, as a special favour from God, that his labour for their salvation might continue until the moment of death, and he confidently foretold that his petition would be granted. His prophecy was fulfilled, for on the Festival of the Holy Trinity, as he was preaching in the chapel of the convent of St. Clare in Valencia, he was suddenly deprived of the power of speech and motion ; being carried to the sacristy, he received Extreme Unction, and, while a delightful perfume filled the air, departed to the Lord he had so faithfully served.

Another instance of his prophetic spirit is recorded regarding the vocation of St. Lewis. Many of his brethren naturally hoped that so promising a youth would prove to have a vocation to their Order, but Father Ambrose always declared the contrary without any hesitation. "No, my brothers," he used to say, "this treasure is not for us ; God has destined it for the Order of St. Dominic."

When still quite a boy Lewis conceived the notion of spending his life as a pilgrim, travelling in poverty from shrine to shrine after the example of the illustrious St. Roch. The generous desire to become entirely devoted to God prompted him to adopt this hidden and laborious life. It is difficult to decide from the accounts of his different biographers the exact age of the Saint when he endeavoured to put this design into execution, but it appears to have been about the time of the death of his spiritual guide, Father Ambrose of Jesus. Indeed, it is probable that had he been alive, Lewis would not have obtained his permission to leave his home.

We cannot suppose that a child so affectionate and

obedient could have decided to abandon his home and his beloved parents, as he thought for ever, without many a bitter pang and a hard struggle against his lower nature. But grace prevailed, and the generous sacrifice was accomplished. Young and unprotected, trusting only in the guiding hand of God, he went forth he knew not whither; and though a pilgrim's life was not that to which he was called, without doubt the Divine Majesty demanded and was highly pleased with the sacrifice of every earthly tie and every worldly convenience which was necessary in the attempt.

If it is asked how Lewis could have reconciled it with his conscience thus to leave home without the consent of his parents, we must account for it by the special impulse of God's grace. He certainly loved obedience, and nothing could have induced him to act against his sense of duty, and therefore, in this act, we must recognise the overruling guidance of God, who demanded from His youthful servant a sacrifice as noble as the sacrifice He demanded of Abraham.

Afraid lest his parents might interfere to prevent what he considered was God's will, Lewis suddenly left the city without obtaining his father's blessing or bidding his mother farewell. That morning he had made a more than usually fervent Confession and Communion, to consecrate himself and his project to God.

When evening closed in and Lewis was absent, his parents quieted their anxiety by supposing that he was engaged in charitable duties to the sick in one of the hospitals. But then they remembered that their obedient son had never remained at night in a hospital without their express permission, and some vague apprehension that he must have fled from home began to alarm their minds. After a fruitless search in the city, and inquiries at the churches and hospitals frequented by their son, all uncer-

tainty was ended by a letter in Lewis' handwriting stating the reason of his absence. The letter ran thus :—

“JESUS AND MARY.

“MY MUCH HONOURED FATHER,—I know full well that you and my mother will feel sorry at my present design, but that sorrow ought not to continue when you know that it is the will of God that I should thus leave you.

“Probably you will ask, How do we know that such is God's will? In answer, you will readily understand that I should never have broken off my studies and started off alone in the midst of the winter's cold unless I had felt powerfully drawn to do so by God's call. And let not the thought of what I have to suffer distress you, for you must remember that our Redeemer came down from heaven, and was born in the coldest season of the year, and that He came to die in order to give ungrateful sinners life. How much more, then, ought I, sinner as I am, to leave the world and to go whithersoever His Majesty calls me, to do penance for my many sins against God?

“I know that my departure will occasion you more sorrow on account of the illness of my mother, but she ought to be comforted by remembering what holy writers say about the happiness of the soul that is afflicted in this world; how its trials are a sign that the eyes of God's tender mercy are turned upon it, and that He intends to reward in glory the good works it does here below. Some people have the good they perform rewarded here, while the evil they fall into is punished in the next world. Therefore this trial is to be accepted with patience; and you should pray that the Divine Majesty may ever support me with His holy Hand, may conduct me as He did Magdalen, and may defend me always from the snares of the enemy.

“I have borrowed a little money from —— (certain people mentioned). This money I have no intention of spending

in pleasure-seeking, but I thought I might need a small sum as a means of support, in case God should please to visit me with illness in punishment for my sins, although His Divine Majesty Himself is the best help and medicine in all maladies. I beg you, my father, to restore this little sum to its owners, that my conscience may be easy.

"I beseech you not to try to discover where I am, for I think you would not succeed ; and even if you did find me, I hope that my God and Master, Jesus, would preserve me firmly in my resolution. I beg you to commend me to His Divine Mother, and to pray that she may guide me to the place in which I can best serve her Son.

"Lastly, I implore you to try and console my mother. Remind her that she has other children to be a comfort to her, and tell her to imagine that I was taken away by death in my infancy.

"Nothing more will I add, except an earnest prayer that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost may be with you, my parents, may ever help you, and be with me. Amen. May the grace be given us to serve God in this life, and in the next to rejoice in eternal rest !"

This letter caused a mingled feeling of joy and sorrow to his parents. They rejoiced to receive any tidings of their son, but they dreaded lest his stratagem might succeed, and deprive them altogether of him who was the joy of their house, the light of their eyes, and who they hoped would be the crown of their old age. Immediate inquiries were made on all sides, and any traveller that had lately entered the town was sought out and asked whether he had seen any young boy of modest and recollected demeanour passing by himself along the road. His father hoped that the saintly comportment of his son might have attracted attention and thus lead to his discovery. Nor was he deceived. Some travellers had noticed the boy, and acting

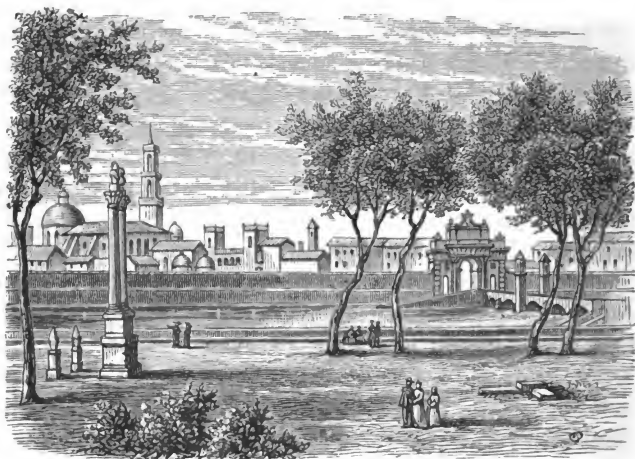
on their information his father's messengers found him resting at a fountain several miles from Valencia.

To induce him to return home they represented in the strongest terms the extreme grief of his parents, and especially that his mother's illness had already so much increased that fears were entertained whether the anguish of her loss would not endanger her life unless he returned to comfort her distress. Lewis, deeply moved, remained for some time in complete silence, consulting God in prayer. The result was a decision to return to his parents. God was satisfied with his readiness to leave all. He had demanded a great sacrifice, but it was enough that the victim should be laid on the altar and the knife should be raised, then the hand was stayed ; and the son's return brought joy to his father's house.

Being now convinced that it was not his vocation to lead the life of an unknown pilgrim wandering from shrine to shrine, Lewis settled down quietly in his own home, occupying his time, as before, in prayer, study, and works of charity, waiting for the voice of God to direct him as to his future career. He received Holy Communion very frequently, and to prevent notice he prudently went to different churches, sometimes to that of St. Francis, at other times to that of St. Sebastian belonging to the Minims, or to the Franciscan Convent of Jesus and Mary outside the city, and often to the Dominican Church, which was afterwards to be his home.

After his return home Lewis had confided to his father that the first shrine he had intended to visit was the celebrated one in Gallicia, of St. James in Compostella. Seeing that his son was determined to consecrate his life to God, his father allowed him to adopt the ecclesiastical costume, which Lewis assumed as a sign that he intended to renounce the world and either to join some Order, or to enter the ranks of the secular Priesthood.

These facts concerning the boyhood of the Saint are mentioned by all his biographers, and Father Antist tells us they were related to him by the nurse who had watched over St. Lewis from his cradle, her account being corroborated by several gentlemen of Valencia who were intimate friends of the Saint's father. Of these Antist mentions particularly Gaspar Micon and John Lawrence Perpiñan, both Notaries of Valencia, who were about seventy years old when he wrote the life of St. Lewis. Antist also informs us that the account of the two remarkable favours granted to John Bertrand by his patron, St. Vincent Ferrer, rests on the authority of St. Lewis himself, who on several occasions mentioned them in preaching about St. Vincent as instances of the power of his intercession.



Valencia from across the river.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE CONVENT OF ST. DOMINIC IN VALENCIA.

Foundation of St. Dominic's—James the Conqueror—History of the Building—State in 1803—Present Condition—Convent of our Lady "del Pilar"—House of St. Lewis.

"Our God is great above all gods. Who then can be able to build Him a worthy house?"—2 PARALIP, ii. 5, 6.

**T**HE convent of the Friar Preachers in Valencia, now unhappily desecrated and to a large extent destroyed, was a structure in many ways remarkable. It was of venerable antiquity, founded as early as 1238 by Father Michael de Fabra, one of the disciples of the holy patriarch St. Dominic himself.

Father Diago, in his history of the Province of Aragon, gives a full account of the circumstances of the foundation, but does not favour us with any description either of the

architecture or arrangements of the building itself. The material building was there for any one to behold, so Father Diago confines himself to details concerning the holy and learned men who formed the stones of the spiritual edifice of the Convent and Province. Of these there was certainly no lack during the long history of the convent, which had the honour of reckoning three canonised Saints among its children, besides a mighty band distinguished for holiness and theological science.

The Goths who had conquered the kingdom of Valencia from the Roman Empire, were in their turn vanquished by the Moors early in the eighth century (A.D. 712). They retained possession of Valencia for nearly four hundred years, when they were driven out by the famous hero the Cid after a siege lasting twenty months. In the year 1144 the Moors once more expelled the Christians, and established Valencia as an independent Moorish kingdom, and so it remained as one of their most important possessions, and the city as one of their chief strongholds in Spain, until King James of Aragon finally expelled them.

When this brave monarch, surnamed the Conqueror, determined to attack the city of Valencia and drive out the infidels, he made a vow to God and our Lady that if he gained the victory he would forthwith found a house for the Dominican Friars as a thanksgiving. The confessor of the king, Father Michael de Fabra, was a Dominican, and while the soldiers commanded by their royal master assaulted the city with the sword and the lance, he poured forth his prayers to God for the success of the Christian arms.

"Thus," says Diago, "the part taken by the Order of St. Dominic in the conquest of the city was by no means insignificant, and the Moors afterwards declared that they saw a figure like Father Michael de Fabra in the air above the contending hosts brandishing a sword against them."

When at length the royal standard floated on the walls



of Valencia, the conqueror was mindful of his promise, and at once set apart the palace of the Moorish king as a dwelling for Father Michael and three companions until a permanent site had been selected for the future convent. In the grand triumphal procession by which the Christian Monarch, at the head of his victorious army, took formal possession of the city, Father Michael advanced first through the gates, bearing aloft a banner, on one side displaying the figure of Christ crucified, on the other the image of the sweet Mother of God.

They had not to wait long in their temporary abode, for the city capitulated on St. Michael's Feast, 1238, and the convent was founded in April of the following year; the king having chosen a spacious and convenient site, which he delivered over to the Order for ever. The words of the pious king are as follows :—

“ Not only do we expose our bodily safety to danger, that the lilies of the Christian name may grow in regions hitherto pagan, but we earnestly labour also that the youthful Order of Friar Preachers newly planted in the Church may flourish in the cities recently acquired by us from the pagans. We, therefore, James, by the favour of God, King of Aragon and Majorca and Valencia, Count of Barcelona and Urgel, and Lord of Montpellier, for the healing of our own soul and the salvation of our parents, by these presents give and concede freely, willingly, and for ever to the Lord God, to the Blessed Mary His Mother, to St. Dominic and the Order of Preachers, that site in Valencia which is before the gate of the Brothers of the Temple, and is bounded by the river Guadalaviar, and by the mill-stream of Beltran de Turvel. . . . All this tenement we give the said Order, that upon it they may build a church and convent and whatever else they need.

“ Given at Valencia in the year 1239.”

Upon this site a church and convent were erected by Father Michael, and on the same spot the Friar Preachers remained until 1835, though the buildings underwent much change during those six centuries. How long a time elapsed before the stately pile of ecclesiastical building was completed, out of which the Friars were expelled in our own time, it would be difficult to ascertain. Diago mentions that Father John Vidal, nephew of Father John Micon, not only raised a sumptuous marble tomb in memory of his uncle, but was able to finish the erection of the great dormitory of the convent. Father Micon died in 1555, so that it is evident that the Priory was erected gradually, and probably underwent numerous alterations during its history. But the site was never changed ; for six long centuries the convent stood on the sandy bank of the Guadalaviar, the western sun throwing the evening shadow of the tower upon its waters ; for six hundred years the sound of the bell was heard night and day calling the religious to sing the praises of God in the choir, and during all that period every day the adorable Sacrifice had been there offered, till at last the light of the altar was quenched, the voice of praise was silenced, the very building in great measure swept away by the modern spirit of revolution.

An English traveller at the beginning of this century, before the destruction had commenced, records thus his impression : "The convent of Santo Domingo has a dome of bright bronze tiles. It is impossible to walk without pleasure in the decayed Gothic cloister, the arches of which are full of mullion-work, and the enclosure well shaded with orange-trees." Another visitor noticed as remarkable, that "at the extremity of the Church of St. Dominic are two chapels of extraordinary magnitude—of our Lady of the Rosary and of St. Vincent Ferrer." Besides the dome mentioned above, another writer tells us of a tower 108 feet in height.

At the present day, though so sad a change has taken place and a considerable part of the old building has been destroyed, much still remains standing. The cloister still exists, as also the Chapter House, both of them considered fine specimens of Gothic architecture. The large chapel of St. Vincent Ferrer, formerly one of the side chapels of the great church of St. Dominic, also remains, and is used as a military chapel. The part of the conventual buildings which has survived the attacks of the modern Vandals is employed as a residence by the Captain General of Valencia.

The Gothic cloister which in 1803 was decaying from age was doubtless the very cloister in which St. Lewis walked and prayed. Probably it would have been already built a century earlier in the time of St. Vincent Ferrer.

At the time of the suppression there was another Priory of the Order in Valencia erected after the time of St. Lewis under the title of Our Lady "del Pilar." It is standing at the present day, and its church, happily not desecrated, is open to the people.

Close to the Church of St. Stephen still stands the house in which St. Lewis was born. It has undergone many changes since his time, but the room in which he first saw the light is preserved as a chapel, and is open on his Festival Day.

## CHAPTER V.

### LEWIS ENTERS THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC.

Choice of Confessor—Father James Ferran—Day of Clothing fixed—  
Disappointment—St. Vincent's Trees—Father John Micon, Prior—  
Receives Lewis, August 26, 1544.

"Go to the side of the holy age, with them that live and give praise to God."—ECCLES. xvii. 25.

**T**HE convent spoken of in the last chapter was destined to be the future home of St Lewis. He seems to have been between seventeen and eighteen years of age when that intimacy with the Fathers began, which resulted so soon in his application to join the Order, though, as mentioned above, he had often visited the church and probably the convent long before.

St. Vincent Ferrer had lived there; his cell had been changed into an oratory, and as John Bertrand had a devotion to St. Vincent even more fervent than that of most Valencians, it is certain that he must have introduced the little Lewis to the chapel of his holy kinsman in his early childhood.

When Father Ambrose of Jesus died, Lewis began to consider whom he should select as his director and spiritual father, and after due deliberation and consulting God in prayer (for he looked upon it as an affair of importance), his choice fell upon Father Lawrence Lopez de Ocaña, a Dominican religious of distinguished merit,

who afterwards had the honour of being elected Prior at Valencia. He became acquainted with Father Lawrence by frequenting certain familiar conferences which that religious was accustomed to give to many of the students of the city after their school hours were ended. Lewis visited him with some of his young companions, and finding solid advantage from his instruction, he determined to place himself under his guidance. With the approval of his new director he began to receive Holy Communion even more frequently than before, and devoted himself with renewed zeal to works of charity.

The Prior who governed the community of St. Dominic's at this time, Father James Ferran, was a man of no ordinary stamp. A convert to the Christian faith, for his parents were Mahometans, natives of Tripoli in Africa, he had shown such constancy and fervour in his new religion, that he had not only been received into the Order of St. Dominic, but rapidly proved himself worthy of the highest confidence. Twice he was elected Provincial of Aragon. It is interesting to know that he composed the beautiful Office provided in the Dominican Breviary for the Feast of St. Raymund Pennafort.

After choosing Father Lopez as his confessor, Lewis visited the Church of the Dominicans more frequently than ever; and his devotion, recollected attitude, and perseverance in prayer being quickly noticed by the Religious, they were highly gratified when he one day made a formal petition to the Prior for the habit of the Order. As his confessor warmly approved of his request, and considered that his vocation was genuine and his desire prompted by the Holy Spirit, Father Ferran heartily rejoiced that God had sent the Community so promising a postulant.

The day for his admission was fixed forthwith. Everything seemed at first to favour his design, but God willed to prove the constancy of his resolution. His father could

not endure the idea of the separation involved by his becoming a religious, and determined to oppose to the utmost his entering religion, or, at least, the Dominican Order.

He accordingly made the strongest representations to the Prior about the weakness of his son's health, saying, that though his spirit was ardent, his body was anything but robust, his constitution had been extremely delicate from infancy, and it was simply madness for him to imagine he could endure the austerities of the Dominican rule. With such earnestness were these arguments urged, and so much weight was given to them by the evident delicacy of the young postulant, that at last the Prior was induced to promise that he would not admit Lewis to the habit.

Until the election of another Prior, therefore, Lewis saw that he must bear the disappointing delay with patience and resignation; but the trial was bitter, and tears used often to fill his eyes when he heard the convent bell calling the religious to the choir. He consoled himself with prayer and by constant visits to the convent, where he used to remain as long as he was allowed, conversing on spiritual subjects with Father Lawrence and the other religious.

In the last spiritual discourse which he gave in the Novitiate, not many months before his death, he referred in pathetic terms and with great simplicity to the grief he suffered from this delay in the accomplishment of his cherished desire to sacrifice all for God. The Dominican convent being near the river, he used, according to his own account, to walk on the bridge and along the road leading towards the sea, and there he would stand in silence, the tears trickling down his face, as he looked at the sunlight sparkling on the bright dome beneath which was the altar he loved, or watched the lengthening shadow of the high tower. From that spot he could hear the solemn tones of the convent bell, or even perhaps see some white figures

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walking in the enclosure garden ;—there was his heart ;—but sadly had he to retrace his steps homeward, remembering that he was not found worthy to be numbered among the sons of St. Dominic.

To console himself he was ever in the convent. As one excuse for going there, he took the orange-trees in the enclosure under his special protection, and was most assiduous in bringing water from the well in the garden belonging to St. Vincent's \* cell, at some considerable distance. "Happy trees, to live in this sacred enclosure, how I envy you !" he thought ; and Father John Perez remembered asking him why he took so much trouble in his self-appointed task. "Well, Father," he replied with a smile, "it would never do to allow these blessed trees to wither for want of water."

His sorrow increased when the approach of night obliged him to return home. Sometimes, indeed, he managed to escape the vigilance of the sacristan, when the doors were closed in the evening gloom, by hiding himself behind a pillar or in the recesses of a side chapel ; then, delighted at the success of his innocent stratagem, he would spend the whole night in prayer before the different altars, imploring from God and our Lady that favour of the religious habit which had been refused him by man.

This trying delay, intended no doubt by Almighty God to purify the good desires of His servant from the dross of any merely human impetuosity, and to subject his soul more completely to the Divine Will, at last came to an end. The term of Father Ferran's office expired. Lewis awaited with anxiety to hear the name of the new Prior, and was filled with hope that his desire to enter the Order would be gratified, when he was told that Father John Micon had been elected.

\* This was St. Vincent Ferrer, the celebrated Patron of Valencia, mentioned before as a kinsman of St. Lewis.

The name of Father John Micon, now forgotten, was at that time renowned throughout Spain. Not only was he a religious of eminent holiness of life, but he was celebrated as a preacher who combined the gifts of popular eloquence with a profound knowledge of theological science. Reports of miracles by which it had pleased God to confirm his apostolate to the Moors, at that time so numerous in the south of Spain, very much enhanced his reputation.

Some details of Father Micon's career will be recorded in a later chapter ; for the present it is enough to relate that one of his first acts, as Prior, was to receive St. Lewis into the Novitiate. If he had done nothing else he would deserve the grateful remembrance of all the children of St. Dominic. We are told that other young men presented themselves at the same time, anxious to be received to the habit ; but Father Micon recommended some, at least, among them to enter other Orders to the rule of which he considered their natural characters better suited ; but in the young Lewis Bertrand, in spite of his pale cheeks and delicate constitution, he recognised all the signs of a true vocation. Lewis really was very weak in health ; for what his father had said to the former Prior was not a mere invention of paternal fondness ; and it therefore needed special discernment to see the signs of a Divine call, in spite of this natural infirmity which could so easily have been considered a providential indication that he was not intended to adopt so austere a rule as that of the Dominican Order. This had actually convinced Father Ferran that he ought not to give Lewis the habit, for unless he had been conscientiously persuaded by the arguments of John Bertrand, he was not the man to have rejected so devout and promising a postulant. Father Micon possessed the necessary discernment, and the very day after he had been installed as Prior he promised Lewis to give him the habit. His joy and thankfulness may be imagined !



While waiting for the happy day to arrive on which it had been arranged he should be received, the holy youth could not restrain his desire to benefit by the exhortations with which the Prior kept up the fervour and religious discipline of his community in certain discourses he was accustomed to deliver in the chapter-room every Friday evening after Compline. While the religious were still in choir, Lewis used to conceal himself in one of the little chapels of the cloister, and after all the community had assembled in the chapter-room and the door was shut, he would creep out of his hiding-place, and kneeling down between the windows, where he could hear the words of the Prior, he used to listen attentively to the discourse, withdrawing himself before its close lest he might be discovered.

As he still dreaded the opposition of his father, and desired to avoid any disturbance of mind at so holy a time, he particularly begged Father Micon that the ceremony of his admission to the habit might be entirely private. The whole preceding night was spent by the fervent postulant before the Blessed Sacrament in earnest prayer that the sacrifice he was about to consummate might prove acceptable to God. Such fervent petitions could not be unheard, and most precious in God's sight must have been the perfect holocaust he offered of his whole life on the morning of the 26th of August 1544, when with the joyful and unanimous consent of the whole community Father John Micon solemnly clothed him in the habit of St. Dominic.

The Saint was at this time eighteen years and seven months old. The white scapular and black mantle of the habit in which he was clothed were fitting emblems of the spotless innocence united with austere penance for which his early life had been so remarkable. To most who receive them they are symbols of what must be aimed at ; in him they were signs of what by God's grace he already was. As the scapular was thrown over his shoulders, he took on

himself with renewed fervour the yoke of Christ's service, never afterwards to be laid aside however hardly it might press ; he put then his hand to the plough, and never did he look back till he was found worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SIMPLE NOVITIATE.

Trials in God's Service—His Father endeavours to Induce him to Leave the Order—His Letter—Interview with his Father—Calumny—Religious Virtues—Profession.

"Son, when thou comest to the service of God, stand in justice and in fear, and prepare thy soul for temptation."—ECCLES. ii. 1.

**I**T has often been noticed that as a rule no one can join the Catholic Church without having some sacrifice greater or smaller to make, some risk to encounter, or some suffering to undergo; and the same thing can be safely asserted of those who by the special call of God enter into the religious life. In various ways, according to the peculiar circumstances of each individual soul, these difficulties arise; but some trial appears always to be allowed to test the constancy of the heart that aspires generously towards perfection, and is determined to be all for God. "Son, when thou comest to the service of God, prepare thy soul for temptation," would be a fitting maxim for the door of every Novitiate.

But if this is true in ordinary cases of religious vocation, how much more certain and more violent is the assault of the devil against the vocation of a saint, or one who promises quickly to become a saint?

Lewis had now so far triumphed as to have received the long-desired habit, but he was still to suffer from the continued opposition of his father. For the first month or six weeks after his reception he was allowed to serve God in peace and gladness of heart in the retirement and silence

of his convent home. God is generally pleased to pour His consolation abundantly into the soul of a novice during the first months of his religious career ; and the heart of St. Lewis, free from all inordinate and unruly affections, must have been flooded with a torrent of heavenly sweetness.

These Divine favours he carefully employed in order to increase the fervour and recollection of his daily life. "From the moment," writes Father Aviñone, "in which he saw himself clothed in the blessed habit of St. Dominic, he applied himself with greater earnestness than ever to the practice of every virtue, but more particularly did he cultivate obedience, humility, and prayer. He made it his special duty to study with attention the lives and actions of our holy Founder, of St Vincent Ferrer, and the other Saints of the Order to which he belonged. By following these great leaders he made such progress in the spiritual life that his whole pleasure was to converse with the Divine Majesty in prayer."

His constancy and perseverance were very soon tested by a severe combat with natural affection.

When his parents discovered that he had been actually clothed and received into the Novitiate, they were grievously afflicted. This was only natural, and in itself worthy of no blame ; but unhappily they proceeded further, and determined to leave nothing untried to shake the resolution of their son. It certainly appears strange that parents so devout, as they undoubtedly were, should not have feared to oppose God's will in thus endeavouring to prevent their son from entering religion : but it is an instance of how greatly mere natural affection can blind even well-meaning and pious people, and how powerful an instrument that affection, so desirable and praiseworthy in itself, often becomes in the devil's hands.

To sacrifice a son so affectionate, so obedient, so winning—the eldest of the family—was undoubtedly a severe trial,

and John Bertrand persuaded himself that the religious had used undue pressure to induce Lewis to enter their Order, and he deceived himself into imagining that he did not desire to oppose his son's vocation, but only wished him to enter some other Order, and to abandon that of St. Dominic.

He therefore wrote a letter to Lewis imploring him to leave an Order to which he was in every way unsuited, advising him, moreover, if he was determined to become a religious, to enter among the Carthusians, or to take the habit of the Fathers of St. Jerome. He expressed the apprehension he entertained that the Dominican Fathers had injudiciously pressed him to take their habit, and that he would afterwards repent of his choice, on one of two accounts ; either because he would discover that he had no aptitude for a life of constant study, such as the Order of St. Dominic implied, or because he would find that his weak constitution and delicate frame could not sustain the amount of austerities involved in the Dominican rule.

Lewis was ordered by his Superiors to answer this letter, and he did so immediately, in the following terms :—

“JESUS, MARY.

“TO MY MUCH HONOURED FATHER,—I have received the letter you sent me, which, after careful consideration, I find to contain two points.

“The first is, that since I desire to enter religion you would prefer me to serve God in the Carthusian Order, or that of St. Jerome.

“The second point is the fear you express, that the religious of this house have influenced my choice and persuaded me to become one of their number.

“As to the first, I hope you will not be offended with me when I declare that I should never be happy elsewhere. In answer to your objection that the abstinence

from meat, the fasts, and the labour prescribed in this Rule will be too much for my constitution, and that with the decided attraction I have to a contemplative life, one of the above-mentioned Orders would suit me far better than this one, in which the Friars are so much occupied in study, and are not thought much of unless they are learned, I beg to remind you, with all respect, of that saying of St. Paul, that the Kingdom of God does not consist in meat and drink, and that those are blamed by him who make a god of their belly.

“Therefore, since I do not believe that the Kingdom of God is meat and drink, and since I am determined not to make a god of my belly, fasts and labours have little power to affright me. Moreover, since the religious of this Order both preach and hear confessions,—duties which cannot be rightly performed without much contemplation,—there is abundant opportunity afforded by the Order for the exercises of the contemplative life, as will be evident to any one who examines the duties and rule prescribed to the religious. I shall not be at all troubled to find that men have a low opinion of me ; indeed, I desire it, and St. Paul exhorts me to do so in these words, ‘ But to me, it is a very small thing to be judged by you, or by man’s day . . . but He that judgeth me is the Lord ’ (1 Cor. iv. 3, 4).

“Therefore, my father, I beg of you, for the love of God, not to be grieved, but rather to be thankful for what the Holy Spirit has done, for it is His work, not mine, and to act against it would be to resist Him. I am certain that by following this method of life I shall save my own soul, and that I shall become a comfort to you, to my mother, and my brothers. And so I say with the Psalmist ; ‘ This is my resting-place for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have chosen it.’

“As to the fear which you entertain that the Dominican Fathers have induced me by persuasion to enter their

Order, I trust that you will believe me to be speaking the truth, when I declare that in reality they were opposed to my design, and especially this was the case with the Master of Novices ; I do not mean to say that they had any personal objection to me, but they, like you, doubted whether I had sufficient strength of body to undertake the hardships of the life ; and this objection was only overcome when they were convinced of my vocation by the persevering importunity with which I demanded the habit. They considered then that it would be resisting the Holy Spirit to refuse to comply with my petition.

“To prove this more clearly, it is well you should know that certain privileges, not commonly accorded to novices, have been granted to me. For instance, I am allowed to write to you, to receive your letters, and to speak to the person whom you sent to see me. But now that I have made it evident to you that I have not been acting by the persuasion of others, but entirely by my own free will and desire, it is right that I should no longer use the liberty given to me ; so in future I shall conform to the ordinary law of the Novitiate. I have said this already to the Novice Master, but he replied that if you expressed a wish to visit me, he should desire me to see you.

“I should add that the Novice Master treats me so cruelly, that he has given me, on account of my weakness, the best cell in the Novitiate, has ordered me, against my own desire, to eat supper three times a week, and that in this cold weather he has taken off the covering from his own bed and has given it to me ; so that in his kindness to me he is cruel to himself, and strips himself to clothe me.

“For all these reasons I hope you will comfort yourself, my dear father, and rest assured that I am enjoying immense consolation of spirit, and that, as to my bodily health, I am stronger than I ever was before. Take care,

therefore, my dear father, lest these words of king David might apply to you, 'there have they trembled for fear where there was no fear' (Ps. xiii. 5).

"May the Grace of the Holy Spirit preserve you and my mother, and all the family,—this is my prayer by day and by night.

"From the Convent of the Preachers.—*October 6.*"

Even this letter, the language of which is so decided, did not satisfy his father's mind. He still hoped to overcome his son's determination, and seems to have sincerely doubted the reality of his vocation. He therefore called on the Prior in order to represent to him strongly all the objections and difficulties that filled his own mind. Father Micon listened patiently to all the arguments suggested by paternal affection, and sympathised heartily with the grief naturally felt at the loss of so beloved a son. But he could not be convinced that Lewis had mistaken his vocation.

However, to satisfy John Bertrand's mind, the Prior sent for Brother Lewis, and in his father's presence said to him, "I command you, solemnly, before God, to declare the exact truth, and to tell us whether you are happy in the Order, and whether you feel yourself to possess sufficient strength to persevere in it."

Without the slightest hesitation the holy youth replied that he would rather die than ever think of leaving the Order. He added, that so determined had he been not to allow his father's visit to expose his vocation to any danger, that he had already made a vow to live and die as a disciple of St. Dominic.

After this decided and unmistakable proof of the reality of his son's vocation, John Bertrand could resist no longer. His faith triumphed over his natural affection, and with tears of loving admiration for the constancy and manly virtue displayed by his son, he gave him his blessing, and



promised to allow him to serve God in peace according to his vocation.

Soon afterwards Father Micon called to console the afflicted mother. He sympathised with her intense grief, but at the same time he so clearly pointed out to her the many signs which indicated that Lewis had been guided by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that she began to see the duty of being resigned to the inevitable separation. Not being of the number of those who, according to St. John Chrysostom, "love the bodies of their children, but despise their souls; who desire them to prosper in this world, without regard to their sufferings in the next," the parents of St. Lewis were, before long, seen kneeling in the Church of St. Dominic, returning hearty thanks to God for the favour their beloved son had received.

This trial, so severe to the affectionate heart of the young novice, was not the last he had to sustain during his Novitiate. Having ignominiously failed in his first attempt to shake the vocation of the Saint, the devil employed another engine of attack, and raised a calumny against him. A layman of Valencia started a report that Lewis was afflicted with some natural defect, the nature of which is not specified. It did not imply anything against his character, but, if true, it would have been sufficient to have rendered him an unfit subject for the Order. His Superiors appear for a time to have been deceived by this false report, for they were hesitating whether it would not be more prudent at once to deprive him of the habit. The suspense was a very grievous affliction to his mind.

Prayer was his only comfort, and one night after Matins, as he was praying fervently before a crucifix in the Chapel of the Rosary, a certain Father approached him and said softly, "My son, we are here alone, tell me whether the report about you is true?" With humility, but most decidedly, Lewis answered, "It is not true, Father." "Well,

I do not believe," rejoined the other, "that you would tell a lie for anything in the world, and therefore be of good heart, for without doubt you will be a religious." Not long afterwards the truth became evident to all, and Lewis was relieved from his anxiety.

During the whole of his Novitiate Lewis was an example of every religious virtue, not only to his young companions, but to the oldest and most advanced Fathers in the community. His one and all-absorbing desire was to become as perfect a religious as possible; and as a sculptor places before him the most perfect models in order to reproduce their beauties, so did he constantly meditate on the virtues of St. Dominic and of his illustrious son, St. Vincent Ferrer, in order to follow their example.

He was also very diligent in his study of the Constitutions of the Order, which were to be the guide of his whole life, and which he intended soon to bind himself to observe with fidelity. Looking upon them as rules full of heavenly wisdom, capable of leading souls to the highest perfection, he was earnest in learning not only the more important laws, but even the minutest ceremony prescribed by them, that he might practise it with exactness.

Besides striving to conform himself to everything prescribed by the Constitutions, he adopted the strict method of life recommended by his patron, St. Vincent Ferrer, in his "Treatise on the Spiritual Life."\* According to the directions of that golden treatise, short as it is comprehensive, he was not only rigorously temperate in eating, but every day he accustomed himself to put aside the better part of the food provided for him in the refectory for the poor of Christ. In this practice he persevered during his whole life.

Except when addressed, he seldom spoke; and by this

\* A translation of this treatise will be found in an Appendix to the Life of St. Vincent Ferrer, by F. A. Pradel, translated by F. A. Dixon.

silence proved that he already understood the value of retirement and solitude as the atmosphere congenial to a spirit of prayer. Humility and meekness appeared in his whole comportment and in every word and action, thus casting a certain halo of beauty around him ; while the careful watch he maintained over all his senses, a sure sign of the inward mortification of his heart and mind, excited the admiration of his fellow-religious.

Not content with the hours of prayer appointed for all the members of that fervent house, he seemed at all times, and during every occupation, to keep his soul in union with God ; and though he was exact and punctual in every community duty and in all the regulations of the Novitiate, nothing external seemed to disturb the recollection of his heart. His diligence was extreme, indeed he appeared never to spend an idle moment, showing continually his love for a penitential and austere life.

Amongst the novices he was not only respected, but loved, for he was always anxious to undertake any lowly duty or disagreeable work, considering himself the servant of his brethren.

Although carefully instructed by spiritual conferences and books, his chief guide was the Holy Spirit Himself, Who, finding his heart free from the obstacles raised against His sweet inspirations by pride and sensuality, led him constantly onwards toward perfection. The more common subjects of his contemplation during this time of his Novitiate, were the sacred Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, and those two eternities of happiness or of misery, of reward or punishment, one of which every man has to choose freely for himself.

Seeing such external fervour and mortification in the young novice, the Fathers of the convent were anxious to convince themselves that these virtues rested on a solid interior foundation, and were of so genuine a character as

to afford fair promise of perseverance. They therefore watched Lewis with the most diligent and unintermitting scrutiny. They measured his footsteps, but could detect no levity ; they noted all his words, and were astonished at his modesty, humility, and recollection ; they even followed the motion of his eyes, and often saw them fixed intently on the figure of our Lord crucified ; in fact, they could discover nothing blameworthy in any part of his conduct. Before the year of his probation had passed, every member of the community was not only thoroughly convinced of his vocation, but most eager to record a vote for his profession ; and thus secure for the Order a subject so exemplary and so highly favoured by God.

His profession, which attached him to the cross of Jesus Christ by the three solemn vows of religion, took place on the 27th of August, the Eve of St. Augustine's Feast, in the year 1545.

The venerable Father John Micon, as Prior of the Convent of Valencia, received his profession. The Order was at that time governed by a Vicar-General, Father Francis Romeo Castellione ; the General, a Spaniard named Father Albert de Casaús, having died in November of the preceding year, 1544, in Valladolid in Old Castile.

St. Lewis was at this time in his twentieth year. It is impossible to describe the fervour of charity that inflamed his soul during this solemn act, when the Holy Ghost, by a baptism of sacred fire, cleansed his spirit from any lingering imperfections of human weakness. The most tepid must be moved to fervour by an action so solemn and a consecration so complete, what then must be the feelings of one already a Saint ? The intensity of his love could be measured only by the Father who seeth in secret, but its silent influence must have filled with unspeakable joy the souls of the religious who had the privilege of kneeling around him in the choir.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ST. LEWIS AS A PROFESSED NOVICE.

Renewed Fervour—Grave but not Morose—Imitation of Saints, and Holy Men living—Father Raphael—Favours in Prayer—Illness—Convent of St. Matthew—Renewed Penance—Temptation to abandon Study—Portrait from Father Antist—Lewis ordained Priest, 1547—First Mass—Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament—Vision of Danger—Father Raphael Shipwrecked.

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice; for they shall have their fill."—ST. MATT. v. 6.

**I**N the Dominican Order it is the rule for the young religious to remain in the Novitiate, and under the spiritual direction of the Novice Master, until the time of their ordination to the priesthood. This part of the Saint's life is therefore necessarily devoid of much external incident. His life was hidden, and he was occupied in the daily routine of duties prescribed for the religious during the time they are students. His time was divided between the choir and the schools.

If the fervour of his life, however, had been admirable during the period of his probation, it redoubled from the moment of his solemn consecration to God, when the value and merit of all his good works were increased by virtue of the sacred vows he had pronounced. Reflecting that he had now a new obligation ever to advance, owing to the solemn promise he had recorded before heaven and earth to aim at perfection according to the spirit of the Order he had entered, he accounted his whole former course to be nothing but negligence and a source of

sorrowful repentance. He therefore implored God to bestow upon him the grace necessary to become a good religious, being entirely blind to his own excellence, and considering himself to be the worst and most remiss in the community.

Afterwards, as Novice Master, he was often accustomed to remind the young religious that even men of the world, from a mere sentiment of honour, are very exact in performing anything to which they have solemnly pledged their word, and more particularly if that promise has been made to some one of high rank and dignity ; and thus by remembering the solemn engagement made to God by a religious, he constantly excited himself to more exactness and diligence in every duty.

Father Antist, who speaks from personal experience, as he was afterwards a novice of the Saint, describes him thus :—"From the time of his profession his life was most austere. He was sparing in the use of food and drink, eager to afflict his body with scourges, haircloth, and watchings, and he was ever diligent in prayer. In conversation he always spoke with a certain gravity, and thus avoided many lighter sins which those easily commit who indulge in foolish and idle talk little fitting the character of religious. And in truth, those who are serious and avoid idle jesting generally make rapid advance in God's service, because as nothing is more serious a business than salvation, so those whose conversation is of a sober and sedate character are more fit for heavenly things ; while those, on the contrary, who take delight in idle jokes and indulge in trivial gossip are always full of venial transgressions, which imperceptibly dispose the soul to commit mortal sin. I never remember him making the slightest joke, relating any idle tale, or indulging in laughter at other things." \*

\* Antist, *Vita Sancti*, cap. i. 12.

It is evident from this testimony of one who knew him intimately that the Saint's natural disposition was grave and serious ; and as sanctity is founded on the natural character, and is necessarily coloured by it, he was perhaps somewhat austere even regarding innocent merriment, but it would be utterly wrong to infer that he was morose or gloomy, since the sweetness and gentleness resulting from grace, and the genuine humility and charity that filled his heart, prevented his gravity from being harsh or offensive. As a consequence of ill-health and other natural causes, his was undoubtedly a character which might easily have degenerated into gloom and sadness, if his nature had not been so entirely under the influence of grace ; but the affection with which he was regarded, not only by his religious brethren but by all who knew him, proves conclusively that the influence of his sanctity, even though he was constantly grave and thoughtful, though he never laughed but only smiled, attracted the hearts of all by its sweet and gentle charity.

From the day of his profession till the last moment of his life he was a perfect model of religious obedience ; and in the processes for his canonisation it is particularly noted that the exactness and cheerful promptitude with which he fulfilled the will of his Superiors, or the slightest duty which had the sanction of obedience, was a source of continual edification to all who beheld it.

Not content with admiring and loving the saints of his Order, he had a most resolute will and desire to imitate their actions, and, after the life of the Holy Patriarch St. Dominic himself, he chose as his special model the glorious Apostle St. Vincent Ferrer, and endeavoured in all things to conform himself to the precepts and example of that great servant of God. The sublime doctrine of St. Vincent's brief but profound treatise on the Spiritual Life, he not only thoroughly mastered theoretically by constant study,

but in the most perfect way reduced its teaching to practice, and made it the rule of his daily conduct.

But besides these glorious heroes of Christian virtue who had been canonised by the Church, there were living examples of holiness ever before his eyes. Many of the Friars of the Convent and Province of Valencia were at that time serving God with extraordinary fervour and earnestness, so that the younger religious had but to imitate their example in order to imbibe the true spirit of their institute. Of these the Venerable Father John Micon has been already mentioned as a religious eminent for holiness and learning, and his instructions and enlightened direction were of invaluable assistance to Lewis in the beginning of his religious career.

Father Raphael Castelle is less known, but was justly revered in Valencia as one of the chief instruments employed by God to restore strict discipline and fervent religious spirit into the convents of the Province. Father Antist informs us that, in some of the convents at least, a free and easy and almost secular manner of life had become the lamentable custom ; and that Father Raphael, who was himself a man devoted to prayer and penance, laboured night and day to establish a more exact observance of the rule, and that which always accompanies it, a more earnest zeal for apostolic labour for the souls of others. In this blessed work he was one of the most energetic followers of the two holy men, Dominic of Monte Mayor and Amator d'Espi, who shed their blood as martyrs in the war they waged against laxity, and by the sacrifice of their lives became the reformers of the Province.\* Father Raphael was so earnest in the matter that he went himself to the Emperor Charles V. to petition that powerful monarch to send some reformed Fathers into the province of Valencia,

\* Some account of these holy men, and their deaths by the hand of an apostate, is given in a later chapter.



that the restoration of observance might be promoted by their influence and example.

Father Laurence Lopez,\* the Saint's confessor before he entered the Order, and Father Michael Navarro, are also mentioned as the special friends of Lewis; it is almost unnecessary to add that they were distinguished for virtue.

Looking on himself as the least fervent in the convent, Lewis admired and strove to imitate the special virtues of each of his friends, the humility of one, the spirit of penance and prayer conspicuous in another, and, like St. Antony, he soon surpassed all others, and became the model of those whose virtues he had desired to emulate.

His prayer was continual; wherever he was, or whatever the duty in which he was engaged, he remained ever tranquilly communing with God. We cannot therefore wonder that even thus early in his spiritual life special favours were vouchsafed him in prayer. These marks of God's good pleasure he received with all simplicity. Far from allowing them unduly to elate his spirit, it did not even occur to his humble mind that they were at all extraordinary, but he one day asked Father Micon to explain to him how it was that sometimes during prayer he lost all control over himself and seemed carried away, he knew not how nor whither, by an invisible force. "When this happens," replied his enlightened guide, "thank God with all humility, for it is a happiness not experienced by all." The truth of this rests on the authority of St. Lewis himself, for he related it to Father John Alarcon in a conversation on the subject of prayer in the convent of St. Anne at Albayda. Afterwards the Saint's mind was agitated by a scruple at having men-

\* This religious must not be confounded with the celebrated John Lopez, also a Dominican, who was Bishop successively of Crotona and Monopoli, and wrote the Annals of his Order down to his own time. He was born in 1524, and wore the habit of St. Dominic for ninety years, dying in 1632, at the great age of 108 years.

tioned it at all, fearing lest the Father might esteem him more highly on account of this gift of God's overflowing goodness.

From his earliest childhood Lewis had felt a special attraction to penance. Now that he had embraced the rule of St. Dominic, his fervour redoubled ; and while yet only a student, still under the guidance of the Novice Master, he was extremely severe in his austerities. Besides a rigorous accomplishment of everything prescribed by rule, he added stricter fasts, prolonged his watchings and prayers, and inflicted on himself every penance that was possible without disobedience. His health, which had always been delicate, gave way completely under this pressure, and he became so seriously ill that his Superiors sent him for change of air to the convent of St. Matthew, which was very healthily situated in the town of St. Matthew, in the kingdom of Valencia. During this illness his patience and resignation, and his spirit of exact obedience to the orders both of Superiors and Doctors, were the admiration of the whole community. The Fathers of St. Matthew's convent considered his stay among them as a special grace from God.

When his health was sufficiently restored to allow him to return to Valencia, many persons, guided more by human prudence than the Spirit of God, advised him to avoid austerities for the future, to consider the weakness of his constitution, and to be indulgent to his body. He listened humbly to these suggestions, but immediately perceiving from what spirit they arose, he did not allow them to influence his conduct. All his biographers remark, as a sign of his solid virtue, that immediately his strength had somewhat returned, he resumed with renewed fervour all his former exercises of prayer and penance. For a man of less virtue, and not so attentive or obedient to Divine grace, there is a danger in too great austerity, for the temptation afterwards

to relinquish all penance, even that prescribed by rule, is so strong and so plausible that it requires the discretion and courage of a Saint to detect and resist it.

After this temptation had been vanquished by the young religious, the crafty enemy assailed him with another. Many hours every day were now devoted to study. During the year of his simple Novitiate he had been free to indulge to the utmost his attraction to prayer and contemplation, which had consequently become so intense that he now experienced serious difficulty in applying himself to the sciences of philosophy and theology. Intellectual exertion was irksome, not from sloth, but from an overpowering desire to converse with God in prayer. For a time this was a dangerous temptation, for he felt inclined to neglect study in order to devote himself exclusively to contemplation, which would have been equivalent to the substitution of the Carthusian for the Dominican vocation. Obedience came to his aid and enabled him to discover this idea to be a delusion of the devil, and in spite of his repugnance he devoted himself with all diligence to the study of sacred learning. He never became a great doctor, like so many of the saints of his Order; he never even took his degree as Master of Theology; but his love for sacred science, and especially for the writings of St. Thomas, was second to none. Seldom was he seen without a book in his hand, and Father Antist declares that, in his opinion, no Father of the Province had read a larger number of works from one end to the other than St. Lewis. But his memory was not naturally retentive, partly perhaps from weakness of health; and speaking of himself he used to say, with a smile, that he was one of those of whom St. Paul spoke, who "are always learning and never coming to the knowledge of truth." He showed his interest in study also by constantly consulting other Fathers as to some question of theology. If any Father who was skilful in scholastic questions

entered his cell, Father Lewis was sure to say, "What is your opinion on this matter I have been reading?" or, "What do you think of this explanation?" His maxim was, that as a general rule, in the Dominican Order, those who are the most studious and the most deeply read in theology, are also the most devout and the most zealous for regular discipline.

The study of sacred science stored his mind with solid food for prayer and contemplation, and secured him from the danger of being deluded by the false consolations and deceptive lights by which the devil often ruins souls who give themselves to contemplation without having acquired a knowledge of the principles of Scripture and theology, and who are not guided by a competent director.

Father Antist gives the following description of the holy youth at this time, and his words are like a portrait bringing even the exterior of the Saint before our mind :—" Reflecting that what he had earned in the Novitiate was not meant for that year alone but for the guidance of his whole life, this good servant of God carefully observed not only what is essential to every religious, namely, Charity, Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, but also everything else prescribed by the rule of his Order, even to the least detail. But he was especially remarkable for exterior modesty of comportment; his senses never seemed to be distracted, but were always under control. Never was any religious more careful to keep his eyes cast down in choir, or the refectory, or wherever he might be, whether within the convent or outside its walls. The same may be said of his modesty in speaking, and those other points of good manners which are the true ornaments of religious." \*

In 1547, only two years after his profession, Lewis was considered by his Superiors to be sufficiently advanced in holiness and virtue to be promoted to the dignity of the

\* Antist, *Vita St. Lud.*, lib. i. cap. i. 13.

priesthood, although he had only attained his twenty-second year. The Council of Trent fixed twenty-four as the lowest age for the priesthood, but this decree was not made till 1563, sixteen years after St. Lewis' ordination.

The command to prepare immediately for ordination awoke the humblest sentiments of self-abasement in his heart, and his deep sense of unworthiness made him redouble his fervour. Reverential awe filled his mind when he reflected on the purity necessary to celebrate the tremendous mysteries of the Altar, but at the same time he rejoiced with exceeding great joy to see the moment had arrived in which he could ascend the Altar of God, of that God who had made glad his youth.

No detail is given of his ordination, but as the Archbishop of Valencia in 1547, was no other than St. Thomas of Villanova himself, we may presume that Lewis received the holy unction of the Priesthood from that illustrious Prelate, and that one Saint ordained another. There is something peculiarly interesting in finding two Saints brought into contact during their lives, and we cannot help feeling that there must have been some secret union of spirit between them, and that St. Thomas must have understood that the humble youth who knelt at his feet to receive the Holy Ghost was destined to perform a wonderful work for God.

The Saint offered the Holy Sacrifice to God for the first time on the twenty-third of October 1547, in the Church of the Convent of Valencia. The devotion he felt in singing his first Mass never relaxed during his whole life, and the fervour with which he performed this great action was so evident that it was often communicated to those who served and assisted at his Mass.

During his whole life the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar was his delight, his support, his only treasure. In the strength of that food he was enabled to undergo every

labour and to persevere in the rough path of penance. One of the evils that had crept into the Church, and had so much diminished the fervour of the faithful, was the neglect of the Holy Sacraments, and the abandonment of the ancient custom of frequent communion. St. Lewis was one of the many Saints who were the instruments in God's hands for the correction of this abuse ; and, as a spiritual director, one of his principal objects was to promote the practice of frequent communion and devotion to the marvellous Presence abiding on our Altars. His maxim was, that as "a favourable wind at sea wafts a ship quickly and safely into harbour, so does the Blessed Sacrament carry our souls into the haven of eternal life."

Father Raphael Castelle has been already mentioned as a special friend of St. Lewis, and after his ordination, when he left the Novitiate and ranked among the Fathers, their intimacy increased. They were kindred spirits, in perfect sympathy, and encouraged each other in the way of virtue. One night, when Lewis was praying after Matins, he saw in spirit Father Raphael as if immersed in deep water, in danger of immediate death. This vision made him redouble his prayers for the spiritual and temporal safety of his beloved brother ; and when some time after Father Raphael had to sail to the island of Majorca, Lewis related to him the vision with which he had been favoured, exhorting him to trust in God if he encountered any danger. On his return home Father Raphael embarked in a ship in which the Viceroy's widow was sailing, and between the islands of Majorca and Iviça a tremendous storm brought all on board the vessel into imminent danger of their lives. Just before the ship foundered with all the crew and passengers, Father Raphael felt impelled to get into one of the boats, though there appeared very slight hopes of its living in so terrific a sea. He threw himself into it with nothing but his tunic and scapular ; the

boat drifted from the ship, which almost immediately went down before his eyes. Thus alone in the raging waters his own death seemed certain, but the boat was carried to the island of Iviça ; Father Raphael was cast ashore, where, after remaining for a considerable time in deep water buffeted by the waves, he at last managed by repeated efforts to reach dry land. The prophetic vision of St. Lewis supported his courage in this battle for life.

St. Lewis used to relate how this good Father was accustomed to pray for long periods with his arms extended in the form of a cross, and how he was often lifted into the air by the vehemence of his prayer, and thus, raised towards heaven, received many revelations from God.


## CHAPTER VIII.

### ST. LEWIS AND HIS FATHER.

Foundation of the Convent of Lombay—Death of Lewis' Father—Visions of his Soul in Purgatory.

"Blessed is the man to whom it is given to have the fear of God."—  
ECCLES. xxv. 15.

"If thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities ; Lord, who shall abide it ?"—  
PSALM cxxix. 3.

T. FRANCIS BORGIA, afterwards the third General of the Society of Jesus, and one of its most illustrious ornaments, had begun, in 1543, to build a convent for the Dominican Friars in a small town called Lombay, not many miles from Valencia. The principal intention of the holy Duke of Gandia in founding and endowing this house, was to provide for the spiritual training of a large number of converts among the Jews and Mahometans in the district. The house was called the Convent of the Holy Cross, and it was completed and the adjoining church consecrated in 1548, the year after the ordination of St. Lewis.

The Venerable Father John Micon was appointed Prior of this new foundation, and his first thought in entering on the office was to secure Father Lewis Bertrand as one of his subjects. So well was he acquainted with the virtues of the young Father, that he considered he could find no one more likely to assist him in establishing the new house in the true spirit of St. Dominic.

During the first year of his residence in Lombay, in the



month of November, while watching one night in prayer, Lewis received a Divine intimation that his father was about to die. He seemed to see him in the agony of death. He related this vision to his confessor the next morning, and in the course of the day it was confirmed by the arrival of a messenger from Valencia sent to summon Lewis to the deathbed of his father. Starting at once, he was able to arrive in Valencia in time to console his father in his last moments and to pray for him as he departed. Claspings his son's hand, the dying man whispered, "My beloved son, in life it was a grief to me to see you a friar, but now it is my greatest comfort. I commend my soul to your prayers."

Thus even in this world was the fortitude with which Lewis had sacrificed all for God abundantly rewarded. It had been difficult to disregard the wishes of so tender a father, but now death united rather than separated them, and he found himself, in the hour of need, the support and comfort of his father's dying moments.

On the 9th of November he departed this life, and St. Lewis, who had assisted him to the last, commended his soul with confidence to the Divine mercy.

But though John Bertrand had now left this mortal life, his intercourse with his son was more constant and intimate than while he was in the flesh. It pleased God to employ his departed soul as one of the instruments by which His chosen servant was to be purified and rendered more thoroughly acceptable in His sight. The gift of the fear of the Lord had been from his childhood one of the principal characteristics of Lewis' spiritual life, and the lessons he received from the departed soul of his father increased in no small degree this salutary dread of the inscrutable judgments of God.

Not long after his death John Bertrand's soul appeared to his son, not in glory, but suffering the grievous pains of

Purgatory. Those punishments, the exact nature of which is hidden by God's merciful dispensation from human eye, were represented to St. Lewis in many different ways, things purely spiritual being thus clothed in material forms that they might be more intelligible. Sometimes it appeared to him as if he saw his father, in bodily shape, thrown violently to the ground from some high tower, with violence enough to fracture all his bones ; at other times he saw him most grievously beaten, or covered with gaping wounds, like those a dagger would inflict. Often, sometimes during the silent hours of the night, sometimes by day, he used to hear his father lamenting in a sorrowful voice, and crying out in imploring accents, "Lewis, my son, help me ; have pity on me ; pray for me that I may be delivered from these pains."

These heartrending visions of his beloved father's sufferings continued constantly for the space of eight years, when at last, in 1556, when Lewis was Vicar of the convent of St. Anne at Albayda, his soul was at length refreshed with a delightful vision, in which he saw his father shining brightly, his face radiant with joy, and reposing in a garden of flowers more lovely than any this world can produce.

Only two years before his own death Lewis related all this himself to his brother, James Bertrand, in company with another friend ; the very remembrance made him weep abundantly.

While the visions of his father's sufferings in Purgatory lasted, Lewis suffered intensely. His almost sleepless nights were spent in fervent prayer for that beloved soul, and if his fervour began in the slightest degree to relax, another vision would make his heart bleed afresh, causing his spirit to wither away within him with pity and fear ; then, prostrate before the throne of God's mercy, he would pour forth burning prayers for the repose of his father's soul. Sometimes he was aroused from sleep, hear-

ing the mournful tones, "Lewis, my son, help me. I am in-grievous torment; pity me, pity me at least, thou my son, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me."

For this object he constantly offered up the Precious Blood in the Holy Sacrifice; he spent many hours in reciting with earnest devotion the whole Psalter of David and the fifteen Mysteries of the Rosary. Not content, however, with these fervent supplications, he added to them the weight of bitter penance. Besides strict fasts, he inflicted on himself the most severe scourgings, in order thus to satisfy the debt of temporal punishment which his father owed to the justice of God. He generally chose the night for this penance, that he might be more secure from interruption, and often he resorted to one of the darkest of the side chapels in the church, but more frequently still he used to shut himself into a little dark sacristy, belonging to a chapel dedicated in the cloister in honour of our Lady of Mercy. In this obscure and solitary corner he constantly spent many hours, accompanying his prayers with terrible strokes of the discipline till the blood, flowing copiously, was sprinkled on the walls and floor.

One night he needed no ordinary courage to enter at all, for at the entrance he found his friend, Father Raphael Castelle, stretched half-dead on the ground. Lewis at once raised him up and rendered him all the assistance in his power, thinking he had been seized with sudden illness. When sufficiently restored to speak, Father Raphael explained that while he was taking the discipline in the little sacristy two devils had appeared and beaten him with clubs almost to death. Even after this appalling account, Lewis, trusting in God, entered the sacristy and scourged himself in his usual manner. This sacristy, thus sanctified by the blood of the Saints, was afterwards converted into an oratory by Father Vincent Gomez.

It may appear astonishing when we consider the holiness of John Bertrand's life, the piety and virtue he ever displayed, his desire to consecrate himself to God as a Carthusian monk, that after all he was detained in Purgatory and suffered so intensely for eight whole years. This is still more remarkable when we consider that he was not only attended on his deathbed by a Saint, but was assisted by such fervent and constant prayers and penances after his departure. And yet, in spite of all, he remained eight years in suffering before entering the garden of Paradise. No wonder that this revelation of God's severity increased the fear of sin, and the deep filial reverence to Him, in the soul of His servant.

Lewis was asked whether he knew why his father had thus suffered. He answered that he thought it was because in his business as notary, when acting somewhat in the capacity of agent for certain rich families of Valencia, he may have participated in some measure in sins committed by them or at their command.

The visions of his father's sufferings instructed St. Lewis to fear the secret judgments of God, who "has commanded that His commandments should be kept with exceeding great care" (Ps. cxviii.) They will have the same salutary effect on all who reflect upon them. God only can weigh the value of our actions, and what can we do but cry out to Him in humility and contrition, "If Thou, O Lord, wilt mark iniquities, Lord, who shall abide it? If Thou, O Lord, shalt arise to judge, who can answer Thee for one in a thousand?"

## CHAPTER IX.

### ST. LEWIS NOVICE MASTER.

Lewis appointed Novice Master—His virtues and instructions on different subjects.

"The soul of a holy man discovereth sometimes true things, more than seven watchmen that sit in a high place to watch."—ECCLES. xxxvii. 18.

**I**N the year 1551, on the 21st of September, the Feast of St. Matthew the Apostle, Lewis was appointed Master of the Novices in the Priory of Valencia.\* He was therefore nearly twenty-six years old, and had been ordained only four years, when he was intrusted with this important office; and considering that there was no lack of Fathers, who had spent many years in religion and were distinguished no less for learning than for their fervour in the practice of virtue, no more striking proof could be afforded of the high esteem in which Lewis was held by the whole province.

The result proved the wisdom of the appointment. Lewis filled this office, for six different periods during his life, for the space altogether of thirty years, and he thus trained a large number of spiritual children, who became the ornament and support of the Order.

\* Aviñone. Roca, lib. i. cap. 6, and the auditors of the Rota in their report, assign the same date. Antist gives 1549. But this is probably a mistake of his translator from Spanish into Latin, for Roca, who wrote at Valencia, tells us that he saw 1551 written in the Profession book by St. Lewis himself. Antist also wrote at Valencia, but he does not say that he examined the book, whereas Roca distinctly declares he did consult it.

The position of Novice Master, as well as being one of the most important and responsible, is one of the most difficult in the whole Order, especially as the junior religious remain under his care after Profession, until their ordination as priests. Seeing that the good of the whole Order depends on the novices being formed in habits of solid virtue and strict discipline, it is evident that it is as essential to provide an able Novice Master, as it is to have a good mother for the proper education of a family.

On his judgment must depend in great measure the admission of novices to Profession ; from his example and instruction they must learn the spirit of their vocation, and they have a right to expect from him wise counsel and enlightened guidance in all their difficulties. On the other hand, the Order, which has intrusted the novices to his care, depends upon him for the correction of their failings.

For these reasons the office is seldom entrusted to any Father who does not unite varied experience and the gravity and authority of age to the necessary qualities of prudence and love of discipline. But all that was wanting to Lewis in years was supplied by grace, and probably he himself was the only one who doubted the wisdom of the appointment.

On entering the Novitiate, so full to him of the delightful memories of the first favours bestowed on him in Religion, the rule he made for himself was to be the first in every duty, and a living example to those under his charge of every virtue he desired to form in them. He well knew what powerful influence is exercised on subjects by the example of their Superiors and elders. Novices, devoting themselves generously to God in the freshness of youth, rightly expect great things from those who have worn the habit for years ; and in Lewis they had a living example of all the instructions he gave them about humility, diligence in prayer, mortification, and the exact observance

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of the Constitutions. His one object was to train them for the glory of God, in such a manner as to make them instruments in God's hands for the salvation of souls.

If he was somewhat severe in correcting the slightest fault against rule, it was not from any lack of charity or consideration, but because he was convinced that those who became accustomed to observe them rigidly in the Novitiate, would have little difficulty in persevering afterwards in the same discipline, and could never look upon them as new and unexpected burdens laid upon their shoulders.

This careful training is the more necessary, "since the observances of the Order of St. Dominic" (to quote the words of Father Aviñone) "are no light burden. Although the fast of seven months is unquestionably a penance, yet for seven months and no less must it be kept, and the same may be asserted about the other penitential exercises prescribed in the Order, and which may be compared to a noiseless file gradually destroying our bodies."

Humility, as preparing the ground for the root of the spiritual tree, was the first virtue he insisted on. His own practice of it was unceasing, and extended to every detail of life. Many who were intimate with him declared, during the processes, that they had never witnessed humility like his, and that all his endeavour was to render himself contemptible as long as he committed no fault. Anything but sin he would gladly do to make himself appear vile and worthless. In conversation he would ingeniously manage to bring some contempt on himself, and represented himself, with genuine simplicity, as the worst and lowest in the whole Order, unworthy of the habit he wore. That this was sincere and not a subtle form of vainglory, he proved by the satisfaction he experienced when others showed that they despised him. On such occasions he would sometimes retire to his cell in a perfect transport of joy, and falling on his knees, would devoutly thank God for His goodness.

He gave the novices a strict injunction to point out to him boldly any defects they perceived in his conduct, and when they gratified him by mentioning some real or imaginary imperfection, he gave signs of extreme pleasure, and often remitted a penance, or gave them some little indulgence to show his gratitude. On one occasion when he was about to administer the discipline to a novice, the Brother remonstrated and said, "Father, you are too severe!" Rejoiced beyond measure at being thus blamed, he replied, "You are right, my son," and immediately remitted the penance he was about to inflict.

Such being his example, it can be easily imagined that his exhortations to the practice of humility were as efficacious as they were fervent. "We ought always to remain," he would say, "in heart and spirit prostrate on the ground, looking upon ourselves as miserable and so weak, that though to-day we may be good, to-morrow, perchance, may see us bad, like St. Peter himself, who though he answered with such boldness and confidence that even if it were necessary to die with Christ, his Master, he would never cease to confess Him, and would never be scandalised in Him, yet alas! shortly afterwards, what do we see? The same Peter denying Him thrice, and even swearing that he never knew his Lord and Master! From this fall Peter learnt humility, and afterwards, when asked by Christ whether he loved Him more than the others, he did not presume to prefer himself before them, but answered with all humility, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee!"

One of his constant maxims was that a perfect religious should strive "to despise himself, but to despise no one else, to despise the world and to despise being despised."\*

St. Augustine, in his Rule, teaches that a Superior, when he feels conscious that he has been harsh in reprehending and correcting a subject, need not ask pardon except of God,

\* This maxim was a favourite one also of St. Philip Neri.



for fear lest authority might thus be compromised. Lewis, however, loved humility so dearly, that he could not help frequently asking pardon even of his own subjects. And such was his sanctity and the estimation in which it was held, that his authority never seemed in the least diminished by this self-humiliation.

In his instructions on the virtue of poverty, he used to maintain that religious ought to have so entire a contempt for all earthly possessions, that if the Superior were to take away the very books from which they studied, and to deprive them even of a cell, they ought to be able without regret to abandon all for the love of God. This would be real poverty after the heart of St. Dominic.

He was equally emphatic in his exhortations on exact religious obedience, and visited even the least failings of that kind in his novices with great severity, considering it to be an essential part of the religious state.

Another point upon which he was especially strict was to form in the young religious the habit of frequent confession, in order to promote that purity of heart so pleasing to God. His own practice was to confess his failings and imperfections, with the utmost contrition, every day at least twice, and sometimes even three times in one day; and when a missionary in the West Indies, one of his greatest trials arose from his isolated position, being far from any priest who could administer to him sacramental absolution.

Novices who expressed a wish to leave the Order, or showed only doubtful signs of vocation, were quickly advised by St. Lewis to depart, and he rigorously sent away any in whom he did not see a real practical intention of labouring after perfection. If any novice left the habit, he would turn to the others and address them in the words of our Lord to His disciples, "Will you also go away?" At the same time he warned them to correspond carefully with the grace of their vocation in order to persevere.

A novice on one occasion related to the Saint a wonderful revelation with which he had been favoured ; but to his astonishment Lewis interrupted the narrative, and simply replied, "Have you had a revelation from Heaven already? You will not persevere in the Order." Not long after, the young man, persisting in the idea that he was called to the life of a hermit, returned to the world, and it is hardly necessary to add that he did not abandon it again for a hermit's cell.

Lewis was never pleased at the idea of a novice having revelations from God, or experiencing any extraordinary movement in prayer, for his maxim was that before the soul can safely fly with the wings of contemplation, a long time must be spent in the discipline of active life, and in bringing the body into subjection by penance, and the will by interior mortification and obedience.

The confidence which the novices soon learnt to repose in their holy master was unbounded, and his influence was greatly increased by the prophecies which from time to time he uttered, and which the event verified. Once, for example, he called four novices aside, and with great solemnity addressed them thus, "My sons, prepare, for during the course of this year one of you will die." Before the end of the year one of them did depart this life, assisted by St. Lewis, and strengthened by the prayers of his fellow-religious.

The visions, which have been already described of the sufferings of his father in Purgatory, continued during the first years in which he held the office of Novice Master, and as this increased very much in his own soul the fear of offending God, it rendered him most anxious not only to avoid the slightest defects himself, but to inspire into the novices also the same hatred of sin. This, undoubtedly, made him severe, but his strictness was ever greatest with himself, and was always tempered with sweetness and gentle

kindness in proper season. The sick were objects of his most tender care. He invariably treated them with the most considerate kindness, and when they felt depressed and discouraged because they could not follow the common exercises, he consoled them with the tenderness of a father, reminding them how great their merit would be if they were resigned to God's Will, and were careful to purify their intention and to nourish in their hearts the love of God.

In seasons of recreation, however distasteful such times were to himself, he considered it a duty to provide every suitable relaxation for the novices, and often obtained various little presents from his family for such occasions; and if some Brother received a private gift, it was always retained for the common advantage in times of recreation. He felt the most hearty sympathy for distress or suffering of any kind, and the novices soon learnt from experience that he was ready to assist them to the utmost in any trial or difficulty they might encounter.

On the other hand, it is true that they experienced his hatred of sin, however slight. His Novitiate was one in which the idle and lukewarm could not certainly have had pleasant times, unless they strove to amend. His very tenderness of heart made him terrible in his chastisements of the smallest faults, lest the tremendous punishments of Purgatory should be incurred by those under his care. That this is not an exaggeration the reader may conclude from the following words of Father Antist, who speaks from personal experience, as he was one of the novices under the Saint:—"He used to punish the novices with a strictness corresponding to that with which he scourged himself, in order to save them, as far as possible, from the penalties of Purgatory. The Chapter of Faults, held at midnight, appeared to us nothing less than a foretaste of the last judgment itself, with such zeal did he reprehend and chastise the least failings in our duties, such as a breach

of silence, sleeping over the time, or a mistake in choir through carelessness ; but after the chapter was over, we knew that he was accustomed to scourge his own shoulders with far heavier blows than those he had inflicted on us " (cap. ii. 22).

On one occasion there was an angry discussion between two novices as to the proper interpretation of a passage in the Treatise of St. Vincent Ferrer on the Spiritual Life. Each party maintained his own opinion with some asperity. At the chapter St. Lewis severely reprehended the two novices, ordered them to kiss the feet of their companions in reparation for the scandal, and even threatened to have them expelled from the Order if the fault were repeated.

Another point of discipline upon which he was especially strict, was that of external modesty of demeanour. A wandering eye and unrestrained body were his detestation. To satisfy himself that his instructions on this point were obeyed when he was not present, he used sometimes to conceal himself in the chapel of St. Vincent Ferrer, from whence he could watch the novices going to choir without being perceived by them ; and if he detected any one walking in an unbecoming manner, and not keeping his eyes modestly cast down, he was severely penanced.

This strictness and severity did no injury to the novices, because it arose so entirely from the love of God and their souls, and was so evidently unmingled with the slightest bitterness or human anger. The sharpest reprehension lost its sting when, with the most genuine humility, the Saint struck his breast, and begged the prayers of those he had been correcting, protesting that if they had their faults, he himself was the worst in the whole Order. When they were smarting under the strokes of his discipline, they were encouraged to bear the penance by remembering that their holy master inflicted tenfold more severe blows on his own shoulders.

On one occasion he had ordered a novice to receive the discipline, and afterwards he discovered that there was not sufficient reason for such a penance. He, therefore, inflicted it with unusual severity on himself, and shed a large quantity of blood. Two of the novices who were astonished at seeing this blood, discovered the discipline still stained with the blood of their holy Master, and preserved it secretly as a relic.

Brother Francis Alemanni, afterwards Prior, master in theology and a distinguished preacher, entering Lewis' cell on one occasion, discovered him in the act of taking the discipline; his astonishment was great when he saw the floor and walls sprinkled with blood. Lewis had forgotten to secure the door, according to his usual custom, for he was most anxious to conceal his penitential exercises from every human eye.

One novice seeing more than usual traces of blood on the floor, was determined to acquaint the Prior with it, in order that his authority might be employed to moderate this extreme austerity, but Lewis implored him for the love of God to keep his secret. "I will amend, my son," he said. But the amendment, as a confidential religious friend discovered, consisted in carefully girding himself with a linen cloth, so that the blood might not mark the floor. Thus he was able in secret, according to the inspiration God bestowed on him, to continue daily chastising his body, and bringing it under subjection.

The secret of all his severity of penance, which would appear useless and positively revolting to worldly minds, was his tender love to Jesus crucified. To increase this love in his own heart was the motive of all his fasts, disciplines, and prayers, and this also was the reason of all penances inflicted on those under his charge. His constant instruction to the novices was to arm themselves on all occasions with the loving remembrance of the Passion of

Jesus Christ, in which he testified, by experience, the soul can find a secure refuge in every distress, strength in every temptation, however trying, and a strong flame of love to consume completely every unruly affection of the heart. The Passion of Jesus Christ, he would say, is the Christian school in which charity, obedience, humility, and all other virtues, are most quickly and efficaciously learnt.

The crucifix accordingly was his inseparable companion. It lay on his table in his cell, and his maxim was that no religious cell should lack this sacred image, in order that the visible memorial of Him who hath loved us might suggest and assist the constant contemplation of His bitter sufferings, of the stripes by which we are healed, and the wounds that are our salvation. Discovering that Brother John Baga had no crucifix in his cell, Lewis said, "No one can become a true son of St. Dominic, if he does not keep a figure of our Lord crucified in his cell," and taking one that was hanging on the wall, he put it into the Brother's hand, saying, "In this you will find whatever you need."

To this tender love to Jesus suffering was united an eminent degree of the gift of fear. This fear was by no means the servile fear of punishment, arising from self-love; but a reverential fear that his own sinfulness would render him unworthy of the eternal possession of God in heaven. The words of Solomon, "Blessed is the man who is always fearful" (Prov. xxviii. 14), formed one of his favourite maxims, and he quite adopted as his own that well-known ejaculation of St. Augustine—*Hic ure, hic seca, hic nunquam parcas, modo in æternum parcas*. "Here burn, here cut, here never spare, so that Thou sparest in eternity!" He confided to an intimate friend that sometimes he would wake from sleep at night with a lively remembrance of the Lord God and His infinite greatness, and the thought of that awful Presence, of which he had so intense a realisation, would make his very bones shake with fear, and he

would recite those words of Eliphaz the Themanite in the book of Job, "In the horror of a vision by night, when deep sleep is wont to hold men, fear seized upon me and trembling, and all my bones were affrighted." \*

In the same way in the midst of a recreation, he was sometimes obliged to hide himself in his cell, oppressed with a lively fear of God's tremendous and secret yet all-just judgments. Once during a dessert he had provided for the novices, he could not refrain from tears; to conceal them he was obliged to leave the table and shut himself up in his cell. Father Thomas Arenas, fearing he was taken suddenly ill, hastened to his assistance, and found him prostrate on the ground shedding floods of tears he was totally unable to restrain. To the anxious inquiries of his friend he only answered, "We eat and chat together; and I know not whether I shall not be lost for ever!" "Such thoughts," remarks Father Aviñone, "frequently torment those souls that truly love God; and St. Lewis often experienced this kind of agony."

This agony of soul is without question an intense suffering, and, while it continues, unites the souls that endure it most intimately to that supreme agony of our Blessed Lord Himself in the Garden of the Mount of Olives, when, in the words of St. Mark, "He began to fear and to be heavy."

But there is another effect of this holy fear after the agony has passed away. Like so many other gifts of God it begins in bitterness, but its fruit and consummation is in light and peace. "The fear of the Lord is honour, and glory, and gladness, and a crown of joy. The fear of the Lord shall delight the heart. . . . With him that feareth the Lord, it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed" (Eccles. i. 11-13).

Now we see Lewis trembling before the Majesty of God,

\* Job iv. 14.

prostrate in the dust, his soul in an agony of fear; but wait until the latter end, see him on the day of his death, and we shall understand how completely verified in his case are those words of the book of Job, which have been chosen as the motto of his life, and form the opening words of the office in his honour, *Cum te consumptum putaveris, orieris ut Lucifer*. "When thou shalt think thyself consumed, thou shalt rise as the day-star" (Job xi. 17).



## CHAPTER X.

### PRAYER AND STUDY.

His gift of prayer and love of study—He sets out for Salamanca, but returns—Natalis de Mena—Death of Father John Micon, and sketch of his career.

"He will open his mouth in prayer, and will make supplication for his sins. For if it shall please the great Lord, He will fill him with the spirit of understanding."—ECCLES. xxxix. 7, 8.

**I**T will not be out of place, thus early in his history, to mention more particularly the sublime and heroic habit of prayer in which St. Lewis persevered, under every variety of outward circumstances, until the close of his life. To say that he became a Saint is of course equivalent to saying that he excelled in prayer. He was one of the few to understand and practise our Lord's teaching in its literal sense. He prayed always, at all times, and in all places.

His soul seemed always conscious of the Divine Presence, and constantly occupied with fervent aspirations of love; and this habit of dwelling in God's sight, and walking before Him, he was most diligent in trying to form in the novices. One day, for instance, as they were taking their recreation in the garden, Lewis joined them, and with a face beaming with holy joy, he exclaimed, "Let us love, my Brothers, let us love the Lord our God!" Such was the fire that his very look enkindled in their hearts, that they felt unable to continue their recreation, and all betook themselves into solitude to commune with God.

Although everywhere Lewis prayed, still he had certain fixed and regular exercises in which he faithfully persevered. Two hours every morning and two hours every evening he always devoted to mental prayer, and to this he added, after dinner, half an hour, in which he considered the joys of our Blessed Lady. Those who went on business to his cell door constantly found him in prayer, and imitating the holy Father St. Dominic, he spent many of the silent night hours watching in the church. After Matins had been chanted in the choir, he not unfrequently remained in prayer till the Community assembled in the morning for Prime. Often, while thus watching, he was heard to weep and utter loud sighs. His knees had become hardened by the long hours of his prayer, but sometimes he varied his position, now lying prostrate, at other times standing erect, and again kneeling, but prostrate so that his forehead touched the pavement. Sometimes when suddenly addressed, it was a little time before he could answer at all, or he would give some incoherent reply, being completely absorbed in God, unconscious of all around.

When prevented from chanting the Office in choir with the Community, he was most punctual in supplying it privately, and, wonderful to say, during his whole life, whatever the nature of his occupations, he never changed the time of the Office, but always recited it faithfully at the exact time. Those who understand what missionary life is, will consider this fact as not the least marvellous of his heroic career.

On taking his Breviary to recite the Office, he was accustomed to say the following devout verse ;

Rex Christe, clementissime  
Tu corda nostra posside,  
Ut Tibi laudes debitas  
Reddamus omni tempore.

Which may be thus translated :

O Christ our King, most meek and kind,  
Do Thou possess our inmost mind,  
That we may render Thee our praise  
Through every moment of our days.

Before each hour of the Office he said an antiphon of the Passion, thus placing before his mind some mystery of our Lord's sufferings to contemplate while reciting the Psalms.

But earnestly as he strove by word and example to accustom the novices to constant prayer, he was careful to warn those who were professed not to neglect sacred studies under the pretence of devoting themselves entirely to the contemplative life. He used to tell us, writes Father Antist, that it was not his duty to found a new Order, but to adhere closely to the ancient traditions of the Dominican Order, in which all the choir religious ought to be men devoted to sacred studies. For experience teaches that in our Order the love of theological science and the love of religious discipline are inseparable, and that those devoted to the study of Scripture and theology generally serve God more devoutly, love more dearly the solitude of their cells, and show more prudence in the conduct of important affairs. On this account the Saint manifested especial esteem for those novices who were most diligent in study, and although they were only youths in age, he entertained a certain reverence for them, "and rightly," adds Father Antist, "for they are worthy of respect; those, I mean, who are really learned, and are not among the number of such as merely imagine themselves to be learned, but in truth are not."

The Lay Brethren Lewis much preferred to remain unlearned, and to study nothing but holy simplicity. He wished them to observe the Constitution which forbids them

the use of books, and taught them that the most beautiful book they could study, and the one most profitable to their souls, was the Holy Rosary of our Blessed Lady. This idea of the Saint would, no doubt, find little favour in the nineteenth century, and perhaps Lewis would be told that he was influenced by a barbarous spirit fit only for the Dark Ages. But we must remember that the Lay Brethren are men who have devoted themselves to the service of God, in order that by constant prayer and unceasing manual labour, the two exercises of the Fathers of the desert, they may strive after Christian perfection. Silence and prayer not only sanctify the soul, but develop and train all the mental faculties. Silence affords the opportunity, prayer supplies the material, for solid reflections, and excluding for the moment the idea of spiritual progress, even considering mere natural mental excellence, it is certain that a man whose thoughts are continually occupied with the sublime truths of the Christian faith, has an intellectual training and exercise far superior to that of a man who devotes his leisure moments to reading the idle trash commonly found in the hands of our working classes, who indulge a taste for reading.

Again, it must be remembered that St. Lewis was speaking of religious who had voluntarily sacrificed every worldly career, who had no families to support, and whose whole time was divided between labour and spiritual exercises. Moreover, if he found Lay Brothers already able to read, he would doubtless have allowed them the discreet use of spiritual books.

As to the Saint's own love of learning, his disciple, Father Antist, speaks, as was noticed above, in unequivocal terms. So remarkable was it, that up to his last illness he was scarcely ever seen, unless when engaged in prayer, without a book in his hand. But his memory was not good, and therefore not being able to retain much that he

studied, he did not appear so learned as others, who, though their reading had not been so extensive, or their diligence so great, were gifted with more retentive memories.

So earnestly did he desire, in spite of this natural defect, to advance, for God's glory, in sacred science, and to become a profound theologian, that he determined to resign the charge of the novices, and to beg permission from his Superiors to devote himself for a time exclusively to study. His intention, in this resolution, which the event proved not to be God's Will that he should carry out, was perfectly upright and pure. Far from being a mere delusion of vain-glory, he was moved by a genuine desire to be more able to labour fruitfully for God and for the salvation of souls. No doubt, also, his sincere humility made him consider himself far less learned than he really was, and therefore unfit for his responsible duties.

He therefore obtained permission from the Father General of the Order, to go to the famous convent of St. Stephen in the city of Salamanca.\* The University of that city enjoyed the highest reputation, not only in Spain itself, but throughout Europe, and numbered nearly seven thousand students. It had been founded in the thirteenth century by Alphonsus IX., King of Leon.

When Lewis announced his intention of becoming a student in Salamanca, and produced the General's letter granting him the necessary permission, the whole Community, both Fathers and novices, were filled with amazement as well as grief. Father John Micon strongly opposed the idea, and used his utmost endeavours to persuade him to change his resolution, and to remain faithful to his post in the Novitiate, assuring him that God had not given him a vocation to teach science, but virtue; and that he was

\* This convent is one of the most magnificent in Spain. After standing empty since the suppression in 1835, it is interesting to know that it is now occupied by Dominican Fathers driven from France.

intended to be Master of novices, not of theology. But Lewis was firm in his purpose ; and in spite of the tears and entreaties of the novices, and the graver remonstrances of the elder religious, who felt certain he was under a delusion, he bid them all farewell and departed on foot towards Salamanca.

That city, however, he did not reach, for at Escusa de Hars, a place in New Castile, about thirty-nine miles from Valencia, he consulted a religious, remarkable for prudence and holiness, who told him plainly and decidedly that he was under a delusion, and it was undoubtedly God's will that he should return and continue the work entrusted to him by his Superiors.

This advice, corroborating so strongly the view taken by Father John Micon and the other Fathers, had great influence on his mind. He hesitated at first, but after earnestly recommending the matter to God in prayer, he determined at last to return to Valencia.

His brethren were still lamenting his departure, and debating among themselves as to who could succeed him in the Novitiate, when his unexpected arrival changed their grief into joy. They welcomed him with one accord, and their first step was to reinstate him in his former office of Novice Master, that he might benefit the souls of others to the general advantage of the Order.

An incident related by Doctor Natalis de Mena, a man of considerable reputation for learning as well as virtue, belongs to this period of the Saint's history. Whilst still a youth, Natalis was intimate with Father John Micon, for whom he retained the highest regard as well as the warmest affection. For some time he was in perplexity as to his vocation, doubting whether God called him to be a secular priest, or to enter the Order of St. Dominic. Father Micon, whose advice he requested, after exhorting him to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit by humble

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prayer, quoted the words of the Prophet Jeremias, "It is good for a man, when he has borne the yoke from his youth" (Lam. iii. 27). Natalis begged the Father to be more explicit in his advice, but he replied, "You should consult Father Lewis Bertrand on this subject." "By no means, Father," answered Natalis, "for in a matter of such importance, I prefer to consult with an older and more experienced man ;—Father Lewis is so very young!" Upon this Father Micon addressed Natalis in a solemn tone in these words, "Father Lewis may appear to you young and inexperienced, but—mark my words and remember them—he will be a second St. Vincent Ferrer here in Valencia, and what is more, you yourself will live to witness it." Lewis was about twenty-seven years old when Father Micon bestowed this high praise upon him, and from that time Natalis felt the utmost reverence for him and consulted him in every emergency. He ultimately became a secular priest, and Father Antist mentions him as "now Rector of Torrente, a place about a mile outside Valencia." When after the death of St. Lewis, the praise of his virtues, labours and miracles was in the mouths of all, Natalis recognised the complete fulfilment of Father Micon's prophecy.

In 1555 the convent of Valencia, and indeed the whole Order, suffered a serious loss in the death of Father John Micon. As he had been for many years a true spiritual Father to St. Lewis, he felt the event as a personal trial to himself, and endeavoured to return the many services rendered him by Father Micon by the most earnest prayers for his eternal repose. His connection with St. Lewis was so intimate that a few words regarding the career of this remarkable man, whose very name is now hardly known, will not be considered a digression.

John Micon was born of poor parents in the kingdom of Valencia, at a place called Albayda, where there was a

Dominican convent presided over for a time by St. Lewis Bertrand. In boyhood he received scarcely any education except what was necessary for the practice of his religion, and at an early age he was employed as a shepherd to tend the flock that formed almost the only property of his father. Possessing considerable natural talent, he showed from infancy the strongest inclination to the practice of virtue, and while tending, like David, his father's flock on the hillsides, he was accustomed to raise his mind to God and to praise the great Maker of the natural beauties with which he was surrounded.

Slight as had been his early education, he had learnt to read, and he was assiduous in his attendance at the instructions in the parish church. He was a general favourite among the peasant boys, whom he would collect in order to repeat to them the substance of what he had read or heard in the church. This young apostle managed also to induce his companions to join with him in reciting certain prayers several times in the day.

His parents struck by these special signs of God's grace, and feeling convinced that he only needed opportunity in order to become learned, resolved to make every sacrifice in order to secure for their son the benefit of a good education. After a certain time passed at school, he made an earnest petition to be clothed in the habit of St. Dominic, and being accepted without hesitation, he entered the Novitiate. At his profession he was affiliated to the convent of Saragossa, and after his ordination he finished his theological course in the University of Salamanca, and received in Valencia the degree of Master in theology.

His learning united to the supernatural gifts of virtue, for which he was equally remarkable, enabled Father Micon to render most substantial and lasting services to his own Order and to the whole Church of Spain.

It would be impossible to enter into any detailed



account of these varied labours, but we read of him as teaching with applause at several Universities, while at the same time he was one of the most zealous and fruitful preachers of the Word of God. He was, moreover, renowned far and wide for his prudence and wisdom in direction, while many religious houses, in which the beauty of primitive observance had been defaced, owed their restoration to his zeal and discretion. When elected Provincial of his Order, he continued with signal success the holy work of reformation already begun by some of his predecessors.

The Emperor Charles V. was most anxious for the conversion of those many Mahometans who were resident in his dominions. Since the time when St. Raymund Pennafort, in the thirteenth century, had founded colleges in many Dominican convents of Spain for the study of Eastern languages, the Order had been foremost in its zealous efforts for the conversion both of the Jews and the Mahometans.\* The wonderful learning of Father Paul Christiani, and his companion Father Raymund Martin, and their public disputations with Jewish Rabbis and Mahometan doctors, are familiar to the students of Spanish Church History. The most famous was the discussion between Father Paul Christiani and the Rabbi Moses of Girone. Father Raymund Martin's work called "*Pugio Fidei*," directed chiefly against the errors of the Jews, was a kind of spiritual arsenal from which the defenders of the Christian faith derived their keenest weapons in the controversial warfare. After labouring zealously for the conversion of the Infidels in Spain, Father Raymund boldly preached the true faith in Tunis itself, and established there a convent of the Order.

Faithful to these traditions, Father John Micon, at the

\* St. Raymund also induced St. Thomas Aquinas to compose his work "*Contra Gentes*."

earnest request of Charles V., devoted himself with such zeal to the work of preaching the faith to the Mahometans of the kingdom of Valencia, and to the instruction and training of those already baptized, as to merit a special eulogium from the holy Duke of Gandia, St. Francis Borgia. The gift of miracles aided the work begun by his learning. The foremost Mahometan leaders frequently acknowledged that Father Micon was a formidable and often an invincible adversary.

It is related that on one occasion, when preaching to a multitude of Mahometans assembled in a public square, the holy man, inspired by the Spirit of God, cried out, "If only you will solemnly promise me to believe in Jesus Christ, and to renounce your superstitions at the sight of such a prodigy, I will raise up a dead man to life in your presence!" The Mahometans refused to guarantee their conversion, either fearing Father Micon's acknowledged power of miracles, or perhaps not feeling certain in their own minds that some imposition would not be attempted.

When too infirm to continue these apostolic labours, Father Micon occupied the closing days of his life by composing several works full of wisdom and piety. Among them is a treatise on "The Precious Blood of Jesus Christ." It is touching to see this venerable and saintly religious, in the evening of life, as the tremendous judgment approached, strengthening his soul by the remembrance of that Precious Blood, which is the only hope and the only refuge for the holy as well as for the greatest sinners.

On two different occasions he was Prior of the Convent of Valencia, and it was during the second of these periods of office that he gave the habit to St. Lewis Bertrand. Worn out at length by labours and austerities, he peacefully went to the other world, on the last of August, A.D. 1555.

When he saw the religious weeping in their affliction at losing one they so deeply revered and loved, a gleam of

the light and animation of other days returned to his dying countenance, as he said, "Weep not, my Fathers, you have a Saint among you, Father Lewis Bertrand, who is a second St. Vincent Ferrer."

As soon as the intelligence of Father Micon's death was published in Valencia, multitudes flocked to the Dominican Church to beg his intercession and to venerate the body of one they considered a Saint. So immense was the throng, that the aid of the Viceroy was requested, and the sacred relics were buried in the silence of the night. Even the Mahometans exclaimed in the streets, "The holy friar is dead! the holy man is dead!"

Many years afterwards a grand tomb was raised in his honour in the chapel of St. Lewis Bertrand.

## CHAPTER XI.

### ST. LEWIS VICAR OF ST. ANNE'S.

Death of St. Thomas Villanova and St. Lewis's Mother—Famine and Plague—Lewis appointed Vicar of St. Anne at Albayda.

"See ye that I alone am, and there is no other God besides Me : I will kill and I will make to live : I will strike and I will heal, and there is none that can deliver out of My Hand."—DEUT. xxxii. 39.

**O**NLY a few days after the death of Father John Micon, St. Thomas of Villanova, the Archbishop of Valencia, was called to the possession of eternal glory. He was an Augustinian Friar, an ardent lover of evangelical poverty, and the example of every virtue to the bishops and clergy of the entire Church. He had been enthroned as Archbishop in 1545, the same year in which St. Lewis was professed, and in 1547, as has already been mentioned, he had ordained the Saint. A heavenly vision had forewarned him that his death would take place on the feast of the Nativity of our Blessed Lady, and on that day, while Mass was being celebrated in his room, just after the priest's Communion, he calmly expired with these words on his lips : "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit !" He was buried in the Church of the Friars of St. Augustine in Valencia, and it is probable that St. Lewis, who was then in the city, assisted at the funeral of the saintly Archbishop. St. Thomas was beatified by Paul V. in 1618, ten years after St. Lewis was placed by the same pontiff in the ranks of the blessed, and canonised by Alexander VII. in

1658, thirteen years before the canonisation of St. Lewis in 1671. In addition to the grief he felt at the loss of Father Micon, St. Lewis was afflicted at this time by the death of his beloved mother, whom God called out of this world in the year 1556. She had always lived as a devout Christian, and in her last moments was supported and consoled by her son, who, after her departure, was constant in his prayers for her speedy entrance into the kingdom of the blessed.

The two years that followed the death of St. Thomas of Villanova, were full of suffering for the inhabitants of the kingdom of Valencia. A severe famine afflicted the country, and reduced the poorer classes to the last extremity of destitution and misery ; but this calamity, itself so grievous, was only the harbinger of one still more awful. In the spring of the year 1557 the city was thrown into the utmost consternation by the appearance of the plague, which continued its ravages in all the towns and in the country districts of the kingdom for three terrible years. One of the first victims of the dreadful malady was Father Clement Benet, a Dominican Friar of the convent of Valencia, and to console him under his affliction he was attended on his deathbed by St. Lewis. Feeling the hand of death upon him, he made a general confession of his whole life to the Saint, and promised that after his departure he would appear to him, if God so willed, and tell him how it fared with him in the next world. The Saint did actually see him on the next night, and Father Clement declared to him that he was saved ; but was being detained in Purgatory for certain smaller faults which he had failed to correct, and especially because, contrary to the Constitutions, he had for a short time worn a linen shirt, and thus had been guilty of disobedience. He earnestly begged St. Lewis to ask the Prior to recommend him to the prayers of the Community, which the Saint did, with-

out, at that time, revealing the vision with which he had been favoured, and the Prior, in chapter, asked the brethren to pray with great fervour for the eternal repose of Father Clement. Six or eight days afterwards St. Lewis was told by one of his penitents, who knew nothing of what had happened, that on the night before she thought she saw the soul of Father Clement ascending to heaven, shining brightly like a star.

The plague having thus broken out amongst a population prepared for its ravages by the hardships of a famine, spread on all sides with frightful rapidity. The Vicar-General, Father Peter of Salamanca, feared lest he might lose all the Community of Valencia if the friars remained together, and he therefore ordered the Prior, Father Michael of St. Dominic, to separate the religious into different houses. St. Lewis was sent to the small convent of St. Anne of Albayda as Vicar, for it was not then a Priory, and it was a great satisfaction to him to be at length able to enjoy the solitude and quiet of a retired country place, so well suited to his favourite exercises of prayer and contemplation.

In the lifetime of St. Vincent Ferrer, who died in 1419, a small chapel dedicated to St. Anne stood on the spot where the convent was afterwards erected. St. Vincent was one day preaching there, and publicly prophesied that in that place a convent would be built, in which God would be served with remarkable fervour. In the year 1538 the little chapel was presented to the Dominican Fathers, and a small convent immediately founded. St. Vincent's prophecy of the fervour with which God would there be worshipped was fully realised during the years that St. Lewis ruled it as Vicar.

Near the convent there was a steep hill of considerable height, and its summit was a favourite resort of the Saint, where, like another Moses, he conversed with God on the

mountain in prayer. Almost every day he was accustomed to ascend this hill, barefoot and alone, to entertain his soul with God. So completely was he carried out of himself at such times, that it was often very difficult for him to collect himself sufficiently to answer a question when he descended again to the convent. On one occasion, for instance, a priest who had come to pay him a visit, met him as he descended the hill on which he had been praying, and asked after his health. St. Lewis only answered, with a countenance radiant with joy, "Oh ! we can be the sons of God, we can be the sons of God !" His friend then perceived that he was in the heights of contemplation and had not been conscious of what had been addressed to him. Father Andrew Cabrerigo testified that this was no uncommon occurrence. The favours he received in his intimate communion with God were never divulged by the humble Saint, for he understood the force of those words : "My secret to myself" (Isa. xxiv. 16) ; but some few crumbs of those heavenly banquets were collected and treasured up by his companions. Thus Father John Alarcon relates that he frequently saw through the crevices of the door the Saint praying in his cell, radiant with a supernatural splendour.

This divine light was also frequently witnessed whilst the Saint was celebrating the tremendous mysteries of the Altar, with a devotion that communicated itself even to those who assisted at his Mass. He usually wept abundantly during the chief part of the time, but especially from the moment of the consecration till the communion. Brother John Perez, who used to serve his Mass, testified that during the time of the holy sacrifice the Saint's countenance was accustomed to shine with wonderful splendour. A gentleman, named Jerome Abella, was often present at St. Lewis' Mass in the convent of St. Anne, and he noticed that when he and his young page, a lad of thirteen named

Melchior Mañez, were the only ones in the church, the Saint remained a full quarter of an hour with the Blessed Sacrament in his hand before communicating, weeping abundantly the whole time. During this time his face shone with the brightness of crystal, a great circle of light surrounding the Blessed Sacrament and the Saint's head. On returning home, the page could not contain his astonishment, and said, "Did you notice, sir, the light which shone around Father Lewis Bertrand's head when he was holding the Blessed Sacrament in his hands?" Knowing how deeply afflicted the humble Saint would be if this supernatural favour were to become generally known, Abella warned his young servant to keep what he had seen a profound secret, a command the boy found it very difficult to obey.

Melchior Mañez afterwards lived for two years in the convent of St. Anne, and during that time was frequently accustomed to serve the Saint's Mass, and he testified that he constantly perceived a bright cloud over his head, and that when before communion he stood with the Blessed Sacrament in his hand, a luminous circle used to surround his head, shining like the sun and shedding brilliant rays of light throughout the church.

The Blessed Sacrament was the nourishment not only of his soul, but in great measure of his body also, so that he languished with weakness whenever he was prevented from celebrating the holy sacrifice. On one occasion, when unable to say Mass, he begged the sacristan, Father Alarcon, to administer holy communion to him, and as the Father made a difficulty and considered that he ought to wait till the next day, he humbly consented, but suffered very much from the delay. On the other hand, he always experienced a feeling of intense joy and consolation on Christmas Day and All Souls' Day, on both of which he was accustomed to celebrate three Masses; following at



Christmas the ordinary custom, and on All Souls' Day availing himself of a special privilege granted by Julius III. His special delight was to remain prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament, and on one occasion he was noticed, while Vicar of St. Anne's, to have remained thus motionless in adoration from early morning until late at night.

In order to preserve his soul from the slightest earthly stain, and to prepare it for the daily visit of the Lord of Purity, he went to confession, with the utmost compunction of heart, every evening and again in the morning before celebrating the holy mysteries; and not content with this, he afflicted his weak body with terrible penances, scourging himself with the greatest severity, and wearing on his lacerated shoulders a rough hair shirt. Father Alarcon related that he had once playfully put his hand on the Saint's shoulder, and was astonished to see him shrink back and tremble with pain. He appeared not to notice this at the moment, but going into the holy Vicar's cell shortly afterwards, he discovered some handkerchiefs saturated with blood, that had been shed by the discipline. He kept these cloths as relics for many years, and distributed small pieces of them to a multitude of the Saint's admirers. Marks of blood were also frequently seen, by his brethren, on his very shoes, and sprinkled on the walls of his cell.

In the midst of all this severity he was constantly sweet and affable in his conduct to others, and spoke of divine things with a gentleness and warmth that won all hearts. His charity to the poor who came to the gates, and inhabited the surrounding country, was beyond all bounds, and at first caused some little murmuring and criticism in the community on account of the poverty of the house. However, St. Lewis was by no means influenced by these considerations, for he relied with simple confidence on Him who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies

of the field. He was determined, with the most complete abandonment, to take our Lord's promises in their literal signification. He therefore brought to the convent door all the poor that he found destitute in the streets, and on account of the pestilence the number of these unfortunate people was unusually large.

His charity was beyond the measure of others in the house, and one day, when the number of those to be relieved was greater than usual, Brother John Perez could not restrain certain expressions of dissatisfaction. "Let it be so, my brother," was the calm reply, "do you imagine God will desert us? Give with true charity everything we have, even the last morsel of bread if necessary, to these suffering members of Christ, and God will provide for us." When nothing remained to give, he would take the alms-bag himself, and becoming the servant of the poor, went from house to house collecting from the faithful for their relief.

The ravages of the plague afforded continual opportunities for heroic sacrifice. All that contracted the fatal contagion in the neighbourhood of the convent became at once objects of his compassion. He watched over them with fatherly care, supplied all their necessities of body and soul, and laid them out for burial.

Many of these poor country people, having no one to assist them when struck down by the prevailing sickness, lay dying or dead on the hillsides, or in the woods where they had taken refuge in the delirium of their agony. St. Lewis after hearing the confessions of all he discovered in a conscious state, went afterwards in search of the bodies of the dead, whom he buried with his own hands. Some of these bodies were in advanced stages of putrefaction, but nothing could daunt the heroic courage and charity of the holy man. Nor was his tender solicitude bounded by the grave itself, for after having buried the

bodies of these poor sufferers, he poured forth continual prayers, and offered the adorable Sacrifice for the eternal repose of their souls.

Notwithstanding this constant exposure of himself and his religious, not a single member of the community took the infection. In spite also of the copious liberality of his alms, or rather on account of that liberality, the needs of the community were abundantly supplied, and the debt with which the convent was burdened was entirely discharged during his term of office. The Superior who succeeded him, diminished the lavish alms which Lewis had given, but found it almost impossible to supply the religious with the barest necessities of life.

Before St. Lewis was appointed Vicar the house could hardly maintain five religious, but though during his term of office the number was larger, no difficulty was experienced. Offerings of corn and money were frequently brought to the convent, although it was a period of scarcity. This was the fruit of Lewis' heroic confidence in God, and the fulfilment of that promise.—“Seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you,” for he was careful not to weary the faithful by constant requests, and certainly never flattered them, or employed any more worldly artifices to obtain help. In the words of Father Antist, “the Blessed God, the Supreme Disposer of all alms, moved the hearts of the faithful to bestow them abundantly on His servant.” The Divine protection was especially evident on one occasion, when, on account of having buried within their enclosure a man who had died of the plague, the friars were strictly forbidden to hold any communication with the outside world. During the whole time, by the blessing of God, they lacked for nothing.

On one occasion when the Procurator was sending certain things to a laundress living near the convent, St. Lewis directed him to enclose secretly some pieces of money.

The woman immediately came to return what she supposed had been sent by mistake, but St. Lewis replied, "Keep it, my daughter, for I know well the great need you have of it." The woman was convinced he must have been moved to this by Divine inspiration, for although she actually was in the greatest poverty and distress she had discovered it to no one.

The convent bell was broken, and the Father Procurator was striving to lay by sufficient money to replace it; and knowing the liberality with which St. Lewis gave everything in alms, he often trembled for his little fund. Nor were his fears groundless, for one day the holy Vicar needing money for some purpose, demanded all that had been already put aside for the bell. The Procurator feeling great annoyance was inclined to remonstrate, but as he easily perceived that his Superior was in earnest, obedience obliged him to deliver up the whole sum. But the disappointment mortified him sorely. Though he submitted, he could not restrain certain feelings of anger, murmuring to himself after he had left St. Lewis, "Blessed God, what a dreadful man this Vicar is!" The Saint, perfectly knowing his feelings, shortly after addressed him thus: "I know well enough what you said to yourself just now, Father; wasn't it this—'Blessed God, what a dreadful man this Vicar is'? But be of good cheer, my dear Father; trust in God, and everything will be right." The Procurator repented of his anger, and wondered greatly at the supernatural penetration of his Superior; but we are not informed how soon he was consoled by money sufficient for the new bell.

Jerome Abella, already mentioned as a witness to the wonderful light that shone around the holy man's head during Mass, was on intimate terms with the Saint, and frequently visited him in the convent of St. Anne. He was a magistrate of Valencia, but with many others had abandoned the plague-stricken city, taking refuge in a country

house some miles from Albayda. Every Sunday and on many festival days he came to receive the holy sacraments from St. Lewis. He testified that the Saint always conversed with him on spiritual matters, and often displayed supernatural knowledge in the advice he gave. As an example he once prophesied, clearly and confidently, an event of considerable importance to Abella's spiritual welfare, which happened twenty years afterwards. The veneration entertained by Jerome for the Saint was increased in the highest degree by the following incident.

St. Lewis began frequently to speak to him in a marked manner about the necessity of patience and resignation to God's will, and bid him prepare to receive a trial from His Divine Majesty. One morning, after Jerome had received Holy Communion, the Saint embraced him tenderly, saying; "Prepare yourself, my son, for God is about to deprive you of the dearest treasure you possess on earth." Shortly afterwards St. Lewis going on a certain festival day to preach and hear confessions at Belgida, where Jerome resided, met Jerome himself coming to Albayda. "I am going to-day," said the Saint, "to console the ladies of your household under a heavy trial they must shortly endure." He accordingly administered the holy sacraments to the whole family, dined with them, and after a spiritual exhortation he thus addressed Jerome and his wife, with a tone expressive of unusual emotion and sympathy: "Would you be resigned to His will if God were to sever the intimate bond that unites you together?" On the Wednesday following the lady was unexpectedly seized with fever, and on Saturday, shortly after taking some food, she suddenly expired, with the name of Jesus on her lips.

Early on Sunday morning St. Lewis ordered Father Martin Suarez to accompany him to Belgida, and on the way they met a messenger hastening towards Albayda. St. Lewis accosted him with the words, "You can return, my

son, I know your message ; your good mistress has departed this life." When he had arrived at Belgida, and had prayed for some time in the chamber of death, he raised his eyes to heaven and said to those present, "The soul of this lady was one of the purest that I have ever known, and yet she will be detained for five days in Purgatory." After the funeral in the church of St. Anne at Albayda, St. Lewis, to console Jerome in his affliction, exhorted him to watch with special care over the education of his five sons, as most of them would have religious vocations. The event verified this prediction, for three entered the Society of Jesus, and one received the habit of St. Francis.

This was not the only instance of the Saint's affection for Jerome Abella's family. His sister, Isabella Belvis, was reduced to the last extremity by the pains of premature childbirth, and Jerome sent a messenger in all haste to summon St. Lewis. On his arrival at Belgida the Saint did not visit the sick woman, but at once repaired to the chapel, and recited the Matins and Lauds for the Office of Christmas day, and then remained for a considerable time in silent prayer. Jerome's patience was at length exhausted, and entering the chapel to explain his sister's danger, the Saint calmly said : "Fear not, those who were assisting her do not understand the case ; before midnight she will be safely delivered, and both mother and child will live." These reassuring words were exactly fulfilled.

The special work of the community of St. Anne was to evangelise the surrounding country, and to preach in the small towns and villages of the neighbourhood. Hitherto St. Lewis had been engaged in no active duties ; but we now find him beginning to employ those missionary gifts, which were afterwards to bring salvation to such multitudes in the New World. His first sermon was preached in a little town near Albayda, called Palomar, dear to his heart as the birthplace of his spiritual Father and intimate friend,

Father John Micon. So striking was the effect produced by his zealous and loving words, that the people, thronging around, actually cut pieces from his cappa to preserve as relics. After this successful attempt he was continually occupied in preaching, catechising, and hearing the confessions of a multitude of persons who, being converted, or strongly moved, by his sermons, resorted to the convent church to receive the Holy Sacraments. He insisted on the Fathers holding themselves constantly prepared to attend the confessionals, especially when the poor country people presented themselves. If the poor penitents were too numerous for all to be attended to in the morning, his custom was to provide them with dinner, entertaining them during the time with spiritual discourse, and thus supplying at once the necessities of soul and body. Great numbers resorted to the Saint himself for confession from the moment he began to preach, the fame of his sanctity quickly spreading over the surrounding district.

Such incidents as the following tended very much to increase the veneration entertained for him. Returning one day from a little place called Agres, where he had been preaching, the Saint saw a shepherd on the hillside tending his flock, and after watching the man for a time, he fell upon his knees and was wrapt for some moments in prayer, his eyes gazing intently towards heaven. He then rose, and accosting the shepherd, revealed to him the miserable condition of his soul, reminded him that he had neglected the Holy Sacraments for three years, adding that he must prepare himself immediately for death which was nigh at hand. The poor shepherd was moved to compunction by these words, went to confession and died within a few days. Father Antist quotes as his authority for this remarkable prophecy Father Martin Suarez, to whom it was related by a person whose evidence was considered reliable, and who had heard the circumstance

from the shepherd himself. He had seen St. Lewis conversing with the shepherd, and asked him what it was the Father had said ; thus he became himself a witness of the prophecy so speedily fulfilled.

On another occasion, when the holy Vicar had been preaching in Moncada, he abruptly left his companion on his return, and disappeared amidst the high standing corn in an adjoining field. An inhabitant of Moncada, named Baptist Ferrer, passing near, to his amazement saw the Saint raised in the air above the wheat, praying in ecstasy.

The sublime gift of fortitude, united to unshaken confidence in God, which is bestowed in copious measure on those called to be apostles, was displayed in a heroic manner by Lewis after one of his sermons. It was his custom boldly to denounce sin, and sometimes, where scandal was public and the sinner well known, the vehement words of the preacher were almost equivalent to public denunciation. This happened on one memorable occasion while he was Vicar of the convent of St. Anne, although the exact date is not recorded. What renders this incident specially remarkable, is the fact that it resulted in a miracle, an allusion to which is found in most pictures of the Saint.

He is generally represented as holding in his hand a crucifix, the shaft of which is formed like the stock or handle of a gun. The following miracle, mentioned by Clement X. in the Bull of Canonisation, accounts for this peculiar artistic symbol :—

A certain gentleman of high rank was publicly known to be leading a scandalous and unchristian life, and hearing a sermon preached by the Saint, he concluded, perhaps not without reason, that his own public and flagrant wickedness was before the mind of the zealous preacher, and drew from him a more than usually severe and scathing denunciation. Whether Lewis really intended to direct



his words against this particular man is not known, but they certainly pierced his guilty conscience, and instead of sentiments of contrition, feelings of bitter resentment were kindled and completely possessed his soul. He had been publicly disgraced—vengeance was his only thought.

As Lewis was leaving, the church in company with Francis Mora, a dependant of this nobleman accosted him and declared that the rage of his master was so great that he would certainly forfeit his life unless he publicly retracted and apologised for the expressions he had used in his sermon. Mora was greatly alarmed, but Lewis quietly answered that nothing would more delight him than to suffer death for his protest against vice, for he would thus receive the crown of martyrdom.

The day after, as Lewis, with the same companion, Francis Mora, was returning on foot to Albayda, the nobleman appeared at a distance on horseback, armed with a gun or arquebuss. Mora, in extreme terror, implored the Saint to seek some place of concealment before their enemy arrived; but Lewis with perfect calmness continued his journey as if no danger threatened. Before long the nobleman rode up, and with fury depicted on every feature he exclaimed, "Wretched friar, do you dare to hold *me* up to public blame?" at the same time levelling his arquebuss and turning the wheel to shoot the Saint in the breast. Without a moment's hesitation Lewis raised his right hand and made the sign of the cross, upon which the arquebuss was immediately transformed into a crucifix.

For an instant there was silence. The astounded nobleman found in his hands the figure of the Redeemer of man dying for His enemies, instead of the deadly weapon he had just before brandished with such murderous intent. His anger was instantly calmed at the sight of this prodigy. With tears of repentance he threw himself from his horse prostrate at the Saint's feet, trembling with awe and

begging pardon with sincere humility. Lewis raised him up, consoled him with many comforting words, implored him to amend his life and to be converted to God, and at last dismissed him in peace. Then turning to Francis Mora, forming the holy sign of the cross on his breast, he said solemnly, "I strictly enjoin you not to mention this miracle to any one until after my death." Shortly afterwards he added, "You will not however be asked about it before thirty years have elapsed."

In 1598, seventeen years after the Saint's death, Francis Mora gave his testimony as to the miracle and the prophetic spirit of St. Lewis.\*

The supernatural fire of zeal which burns so efficaciously in the preaching of those who have the true spirit of apostles is enkindled by communication with God, who is "a consuming fire."

To obtain this heavenly fire it was the Saint's invariable custom to pray with extraordinary fervour in the Sacristy just before ascending the pulpit, the consequence being that when he entered the pulpit his face frequently shone with supernatural splendour, the sacred flame of charity, without which all gifts of eloquence are like sounding brass, inflaming his very countenance. This wonderful radiance was often perceived during the course of his sermon, especially if the subject moved his affections more than usual as when speaking of the love of God or the sufferings of Jesus Christ. At such times he was completely lifted in spirit above the earth, and his words seemed to flow forth from his burning heart, like a pure stream of molten gold from the furnace.

His exhortations in the confessional were equally effica-

\* As this event happened before 1560, and Mora was not examined as a witness for the Saint's process, or at least did not mention the miracle till 1598, St. Lewis intended that thirty years at least would pass before his testimony was needed.

cious, capable of moving the coldest heart to fervour. Brother John Perez once overheard Father Alphonsus Godoy uttering loud lamentations, sighing and groaning at the Saint's feet, and the Father explained it by saying, "O Brother John ! one burning coal lights up another, however cold and lifeless." The Brother experienced the same, for the first words of the Saint in confession filled his heart with intense emotions of contrition and divine love.

Father Alarcon mentions that St. Lewis was once, according to his custom, conversing with him on spiritual subjects, when a layman, who had been listening unperceived, suddenly exclaimed, "God bless you, my Fathers ! Your holy words have driven from me a design I had formed of murdering an enemy of mine." St. Lewis used to cite this incident as a proof of the benefit of conversation on spiritual subjects. When the same Father Alarcon complained of the cold during a severe winter, St. Lewis recommended him to betake himself to prayer, adding, "Did it never happen to you, Father, to begin to pray benumbed with cold, and soon experience a glowing heat?"

The plague still raging in Valencia, the Fathers who remained there devoted themselves entirely to the service of the sick. The Prior, Father Michael of St. Dominic, a religious of consummate virtue, distinguished himself especially by his heroic charity, burying the dead with his own hands, as well as attending to the spiritual needs of the dying. One day, while St. Lewis was praying in St. Anne's at Albayda, the Prior appeared to him in glory, and kissing his forehead announced that he had just died of the plague, and was about to enter the eternal kingdom. Twenty-two others of the community died of the same terrible disease, and St. Lewis consoled one of the Fathers, who was lamenting their loss, by assuring him that their salvation was secure, for they had appeared in glory to a certain religious, whom all believed to be himself.

About thirty miles from the convent there lived a hermit who had for many years edified the whole country by a life of great austerity and continued prayer. He lived in a cave, and appeared barefoot and clad in a rough tunic, with his rosary constantly in his hands. This holy solitary made a journey to visit St. Lewis, the fame of whose sanctity and miracles had reached his ears, and on seeing him he exclaimed, "Thou art an angel, Father Lewis, thou art an angel! oh, what glory God has prepared for thee!" St. Lewis received the servant of God with much joy, administered the holy sacraments to him, and entertained him for three days as his guest, conversing with him on spiritual subjects.

Every year the peasants were accustomed to burn the stubble on the hillsides near the convent of St. Anne, for the benefit of the land. While St. Lewis was Vicar, this was the occasion of a remarkable miracle, attested by eye-witnesses. The fire on the hill was carried by the wind towards the convent, and threatened the vineyard with destruction. No means of checking the flames being at hand, they raged every moment with increasing fierceness. Amidst the general confusion Lewis remained calm and unmoved. Lifting his eyes to heaven, he breathed a fervent prayer, and then made a sign of the cross towards the flames, which were instantaneously extinguished. So suddenly did this happen, that much wood remained half-burnt through, although a moment before the flames had been shooting upwards and spreading on every side with the utmost vehemence. Thus he is numbered among those who "by faith quenched the violence of fire" (Heb. xi. 34).

But his power with God was not only thus exerted to control the most ungovernable of elements, but in a multitude of instances he displayed marvellous gifts of discernment of spirits, detecting the insidious snares of the devil. The country people had unbounded confidence in his advice, and

resorted to him at once in their various trials and difficulties.

Frequently, when implored to assist some poor sufferer, a contest would arise between his charity and humility, the sight of another's sufferings moving him at once to deep compassion, while he feared at the same time to gain a reputation for miraculous powers by employing supernatural means. One favourite device he had recourse to in his dilemma was the use of the Holy Rosary and the intercession of Our Lady, thus honouring her and encouraging his favourite devotion.

One instance of this was the cure of the wife of the Count of Albayda. She was reduced to the last extremity of weakness from an illness under which she was suffering, and her life being despaired of, St. Lewis was summoned to assist her to prepare for her approaching death. The Saint came without delay, and exhorting her to confidence in the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, hung his own rosary round her neck. The illness immediately vanished, her strength returned, and instead of being prepared by the Saint for death, she joined with him in earnest thanksgiving for her miraculous recovery.

Thus passed quickly away the three years during which St. Lewis was Vicar of St. Anne's at Albayda. They were years of dreadful public calamity, but the miseries of the country people had been relieved by the presence of the Saint, who devoted himself with such heroic charity and self-sacrifice to their service, assisting them in all their necessities, both spiritual and temporal, by his zealous preaching, his wisdom as a confessor, his abundant alms, and the marvellous power of his miracles. Long did the remembrance of St. Lewis linger in the valleys and on the hillsides of Albayda.

## CHAPTER XII.

### LABOURS IN VALENCIA.

Return of St. Lewis to Valencia—Again appointed Novice Master—  
Preaches in different Places—Punishment of the Turkish Corsairs—  
Prophetical spirit—Letter to St. Teresa.

"He that shall do and teach, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven."—ST. MATT. v. 19.

"Let them know that the Lord is Thy Name: Thou alone art the most high over all the earth."—PSALM lxxxii. 19.

**I**N 1560 the city of Valencia was declared free from the pestilence which had been decimating its inhabitants, and St. Lewis was accordingly recalled to his old convent. Many changes had taken place since he left,—twenty-one of the religious having died, besides the late Prior, Father Michael of St. Dominic, and although certain of their salvation, it must have deeply affected the Saint to miss, after an absence of only three brief years, so many of his Brothers in Christ. On his arrival at Valencia he was immediately reappointed Novice Master, and began to exercise, with renewed fervour, all the virtues that he had already displayed in that office.

"At this time," writes Father Antist, "I myself became his subject, and therefore having lived under his guidance, I can relate much concerning his virtues from my own personal knowledge. I offer to God infinite thanks, that although I did not receive the sacred habit, nor make my profession under him, yet that I lived as a

professed novice under his care for a year and a half." But his duties in the Novitiate were not the only ones he was appointed to perform. When we consider the number of hours he occupied in prayer; his unremitting diligence in all the duties of the community, his assiduity in hearing confessions, and the anxieties of his office as Novice Master, it is certainly astonishing that he was able at the same time to preach in various places.

He had proved himself to possess in so eminent a degree the gifts necessary for training the novices, but it had been thought expedient to confine his energies to the duties of that office, in spite of his ardent zeal for souls and the advantage that the faithful would derive from his preaching. Moreover his health being so delicate, it was considered wonderful that he could combine all the observances of the Order with the cares of the Novitiate, without adding to them the labours of the apostolic life. His voice also lacked strength, and its tones were not naturally agreeable. Altogether it had appeared hitherto prudent to allow him to devote himself entirely to the novices.

But after the wonderful effects of his preaching in the country, while he resided at Albayda, his Superiors felt that they could no longer suffer such a light to remain hidden, and they considered it a duty to employ him in exterior works for the salvation of souls. Once in the pulpit, grace supplied the defects of nature. His strength increased, his voice was altered in tone and power. The reputation of his sanctity gathered crowds to his sermons. He was obliged to preach in the cathedral and the most spacious churches, and sometimes it was necessary to resort to one of the public squares of the city. God wrought numberless conversions through the words of His servant.

Besides these sermons to large bodies of people, he was frequently employed in the more lowly but not less use-

ful duty of instructing poor children in the Christian doctrine. His zeal and humility combined made this a favourite work. There still exists in Valencia an institution, rendered venerable not only by its antiquity, but because it can boast of being founded by St. Vincent Ferrer. It is an orphanage containing about one hundred boys and fifty girls. The children are admitted from the age of seven, and remain there to be educated till twelve, and from that age till fourteen, going out during the day to learn useful trades. During this apprenticeship they return to the institution for the night. "The cleanliness," says a modern traveller, "usual in Valencia is remarkable in this institution, and the diet abundant and of good quality." Lewis naturally took a lively interest in this charity established by his patron, St. Vincent, and frequently went there to instruct the children.

During the Lent following his return to Valencia we find him preaching at Alcoy, a town about twelve leagues from the city. While engaged in this fatiguing work, he considered it doubly necessary to lead a life of austerity and prayer. According to his teaching, enforced certainly by his own constant practice, men will never be powerfully influenced by words unless accompanied by example, and penance is necessary with prayer in order to win from God the grace of conversion for sinners. He therefore fasted frequently on bread and water, his rest was taken on a rush mat spread on the ground, great portions of the night being consumed in watching and in fervent prayer.

Alcoy was not the only scene of his missionary labour at this period. The Countess Beatrice of Mendoza, a lady distinguished for her piety, had heard much in praise of the Saint from Father Jordan, one of the community at Valencia. She resided at a place called Cocentayna, and she prevailed on the Prior to send St. Lewis there on many different occasions to preach and hear confessions.



A suitable chamber was of course provided for the Saint on these occasions, and a servant named Peter Micon, who afterwards became a Dominican, was appointed to attend upon him to supply all his wants. This man noticed that the Saint never used the bed prepared for him, and declared that however early he himself rose to watch the holy priest, he invariably discovered him kneeling in prayer.

In the spring of the year 1561 St. Lewis obtained from God a signal judgment on some Moorish freebooters who landed in Valencia. These marauders were a constant terror to the coast of Spain during the sixteenth century. A fleet of their galleys would suddenly swoop down upon some undefended place, secure all the plunder that could be discovered, and carry off many of the inhabitants, in order to employ them as slaves, or extort an exorbitant ransom. Towers still remain on the banks of the Ebro and elsewhere erected as defences against these attacks of the Corsairs.\*

On the present occasion, in the month of April, some galleys anchored at Gao, the port of Valencia, in order to induce the citizens to ransom a large number of Christians who had been captured in raids upon the Spanish coast. While the ransom money was being collected, the leader of the freebooters had the insolence to march into the city surrounded by his guard. No doubt the authorities were afraid to molest him lest the lives of the captives on the galleys might be sacrificed.

It was a festival of the Church, and all the city was

\* These towers were probably erected when the whole kingdom of Valencia was in a panic from a threatened invasion of the Turks under the dreaded Barbarossa, or Aroodje as the Mahometans called him. In the midst of the general agitation, when every one seemed to have lost all presence of mind, Gasca, the Bishop of Palencia, who happened to be in the kingdom, was the only man who seemed calm enough to devise means of defence. The towers were raised at his suggestion, and helped to baffle Barbarossa. See Prescott, Peru, vol. ii. p. 201.

moved with indignation at the insolence of the infidels especially as reflecting on the Christian religion. No one felt it more deeply than St. Lewis, though his anger was purely from holy zeal, considering the insults of the Moors as offered to Jesus Christ in the persons of His children.

In the evening, when the novices were at their recreation in the garden, St. Lewis spoke to them shortly about the festival they were celebrating, and then, transported with holy indignation, he exclaimed, "Who can endure to think, my sons, that these enemies of Christ, after inflicting such injury on the Christians, should have paraded through the city to-day, and even now are departing in triumph? This is our business, my sons, we must see to it; let us then kneel down, and turning towards the sea, devoutly recite a psalm against the Moors." Inspired by his burning words with the utmost fervour, all the novices at once fell on their knees and recited the psalm with him. Shortly afterwards the Moorish galleys sailed. They had not proceeded far when a sudden storm of tremendous violence overtook them, and they were engulfed in the waves. This visible judgment on the Moors, St. Lewis attributed entirely to the fervour of the prayers of the novices. But he was troubled afterwards with a scruple as to whether he had acted aright in thus exciting their feelings against the Moors and begging for their punishment. Father Antist, who was himself present, writes that he does not clearly remember whether the psalm recited on the occasion was the 108th—"Deus laudem meam," commonly called the Psalm of Malediction, or the 82nd, beginning, "*Deus, quis similis erit Tibi*," which, he adds, would be certainly most appropriate to be recited for the overthrow of the Moors, or any other enemies of the Church.

While residing at this period in Valencia, St. Lewis was consulted by his friend Jerome Abella, touching a marriage

that was contemplated between his niece, named Anne Belvis, and a certain young man of rich and noble family in the city. From what was related in the last chapter it will be remembered that Jerome had every reason to repose implicit confidence in the Saint's foresight. His trust was not misplaced, for St. Lewis answered, "This marriage will twice be talked about; but it will not take place: it will be better for your niece that it should be abandoned, for it would cause her much suffering." Jerome testified that on two different occasions the marriage was contemplated, but was never concluded, that the young man fell grievously ill, and vowed if he recovered his health to enter a religious order. He fulfilled his vow, but afterwards became insane. This had been evidently foreseen by the holy man.

A friend of Anne Belvis was in deep affliction on account of the unchristian life of her husband, and knowing the marvellous effect of the Saint's prayers, she implored him to obtain from God the conversion of her husband. The Saint promised to pray for the intention recommended to him, and a few days after he told Jerome Abella that God in His mercy would soon punish the man so severely that he would abandon his vices and be converted to a truly Christian life. The affection he entertained for his family was the instrument of his chastisement. All his children fell suddenly ill, and the one whom he loved with a special tenderness was taken from him. At the same time God's grace penetrated his softened heart, and he became a sincere penitent.

To another lady, Angela Vives, the wife of Francis Abella, the Saint one day said, "The children you have now will be your comfort in this life, but those you will have after this, you owe to heaven." Not long afterwards another child was born, but was taken to heaven shortly after baptism.

It was about this time that an event took place, most interesting in itself as displaying the eminent gift of counsel with which Lewis was enriched, and invested with a peculiar charm as bringing together for a moment in God's service two kindred spirits, two noble and holy souls. St. Teresa was at this time endeavouring to ascertain the will of God as to the reform which He had inspired her to effect in the ancient Order of Mount Carmel. Although Lewis was only thirty-four years old, the fame of his wisdom and holiness had already reached the ears of St. Teresa, and she wrote a letter begging his advice as to the projected reform, setting forth the desires with which God had inspired her generous soul, and at the same time describing all the difficulties and obstacles which were so formidable, and at that time appeared insuperable.

After an interval of three or four months, during which he recommended the matter most earnestly to God, Lewis answered by the following letter :—

*“ Valencia.*

“MOTHER TERESA,—I received your letter, and because I saw that the matter upon which you consulted me was one that most nearly concerned the service of God, I wished, before answering, to recommend it to the Divine Majesty in my sacrifices and tepid prayers. For this reason I did not reply sooner.

“Now, in the name of the same Lord, I tell you courageously to undertake the great work before you, in which God will help and favour you ; and in His name I assure you that before fifty years are passed, your Order will be one of the most illustrious in the Church of God.

“FRAY LUIS BERTRAN.”

This letter, which, although so very brief, was still written with all the authority of a prophet, brought great light and encouragement to the soul of St. Teresa, and had no small

influence in helping her to begin the arduous work of the reform.\*

The prediction of St. Lewis was signally fulfilled, for St. Teresa was able, during her lifetime, to found seventeen convents of nuns and fifteen houses for the discalced friars, and before the fifty years that St. Lewis mentioned had elapsed, numerous provinces of the Teresian Reform had been founded in various countries.

As will be remarked, no date is given in this letter of St. Lewis to St. Teresa. It is therefore introduced at the end of this chapter because it was probably written while Lewis was at Valencia, before departing for South America. St. Teresa founded her first convent of Primitive Observance in 1562, and therefore the time of her greatest anxiety would have been during the two preceding years, in one of which she no doubt wrote for the advice of the now famous Father Lewis of Valencia. He did not depart for America till 1562.

Mr. David Lewis, in his "Life of St. Teresa," assigns 1560 as the date of her consultation with St. Lewis Bertrand.

\* This prophecy of St. Lewis, and the services rendered to St. Teresa by Father Dominic Bañez, Father Peter Ybañez, and others, were no small assistance in the work of the reform, so that it is said in the history of the Carmelite Order, "The Religious of St. Dominic have greatly favoured our reform, and have contributed much to its extension with the same charity and zeal with which they aided its establishment."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### DEPARTURE TO AMERICA.

An Impostor at the Convent—St. Lewis determines to go to America, is Opposed, but Embarks and Arrives at Carthagena.

“And Jesus said to them, Come after Me and I will make you fishers of men. And immediately leaving their nets, they followed Him.”—ST. MARK i. 17, 18.

**S**T. LEWIS was now thirty-six years old, and had worn the habit of religion for eighteen years. They had been years, as we have seen, replete with good works of every description, and never for a moment had the fervour with which he first dedicated himself to God relaxed. He had laid the solid foundations of his spiritual life in the most punctual and exact observance of even the least things enjoined by the Constitutions of his Order,—in poverty, humility, and obedience. His gift of prayer was of the highest order, and already he had received many remarkable favours and special lights.

To prayer he had accustomed himself to unite the sharpest and most trying mortifications of the body, in spite of the extreme weakness of his health and the labours he was obliged to undergo. He fasted rigorously, slept little, lay upon the bare ground, watched whole nights in prayer, scourged himself constantly to blood. For many years he had discharged the difficult duties of Novice Master in a manner that elicited the warmest approbation of the whole province, and for some time had also undertaken, with untiring energy, the labour of Apostolic preaching.

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All this, and countless other things unknown to us, may be considered as the providential preparation and training God provided for His servant in order to fit him to become the apostle of a vast region of the New World.

He certainly could never have endured the immense labours and sufferings which were the ransom he paid for the rescue of countless thousands of souls from the slavery of the devil, had he not been inured to pain and raised to the highest sanctity by his long course of prayer and penance.

Wonderful are the ways of God, and marvellous is His power of bringing good out of evil, and making even the sins of men instruments of His holy designs. An impostor, who at this time deceived the Fathers of Valencia, was the means in God's hands of sending St. Lewis to South America. While he was still Novice Master, in 1561, a young man presented himself at the convent dressed in the habit of the Order, with papers that were afterwards proved to be forgeries. He was received into the Novitiate, as he represented himself to be a professed novice, and placed under St. Lewis' charge. He had come from South America, and Father Antist, who was his companion in the Novitiate, gives us the following rather amusing description of him:—"He lived with us," he says, "more than a year, and as he had never been a novice, nor educated in the Order, he was no small scandal to me and the other novices, and sometimes a great annoyance to our Master, Father Lewis. I therefore consider that God must have allowed all these defects in this West Indian, in order to try our patience, and that of our Novice Master. When the Provincial made his visitation, and was determined to punish him with great severity, Lewis threw himself at his feet, and with tears entreated him to remit the penance, for, said the Saint, "if the Indian has done wrong, the fault is mine!"

But although such a torment to the community by his irregularities, this impostor was able to give St. Lewis accurate information concerning the state of the people in New Granada. He described the ignorance and superstition of the poor natives, the scarcity of missionaries, and the prejudice excited in their minds against the Christian religion by the vices and cruelties of too many of the Spaniards. The pictures he drew moved the heart of the Saint with the deepest compassion, and filled him with anguish at the thought of such multitudes of sheep perishing in the desert without shepherds to lead them into the pastures of eternal life. But what added in no small measure to the desire that was now excited in his heart to devote himself to these distant missions, was the descriptions given him of the intense sufferings endured by the missionaries, and the glorious martyrdoms that had already taken place. Frequently he was told were the preachers of the gospel killed, and sometimes devoured by their savage murderers. These things, which to ordinary souls would have proved difficulties hard to surmount, were the very considerations that made St. Lewis still more anxious to throw himself at once into the work.

The love of God so completely possessed his soul, that the one desire of his heart was to shed his blood for Jesus Christ. This was no new feeling, for he had always been accustomed to pray for the crown of martyrdom, and whenever during the holy sacrifice he elevated the Blessed Sacrament, he used to breathe forth the prayer of St. Peter Martyr,—“Grant, O Lord, that I may die for Thee, who didst deign to die for me.” Often also would he use the words of the heroic martyr, St. Vincent, the patron of Valencia, “This is what I have always desired, this is what I have longed for with all my soul !”

The missions of South America, therefore, seemed to offer that opportunity of the highest act of self-sacrifice



which he had so earnestly desired to consummate. Sometimes he would exclaim, "How happy should we be if for the love of Jesus Christ we were dragged in chains to prison through these streets. Then should we understand how sweet it is to suffer for Christ, then should we realise the truth of St. Luke's words about the apostles, when they were cast out by the Jewish Council,—'And they went from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.' But we are not worthy of so great a blessing." On another occasion, when speaking to one of his intimate spiritual friends, he showed that he perfectly possessed the spirit which enabled St. Dominic to make that celebrated answer to the heretics. They inquired what he would have done if he had been delivered into their power, to which he replied without hesitation, "I should have asked you as a favour not to kill me with one blow; but to cut me into small pieces that I might suffer more for Jesus Christ." St. Lewis, animated by the same spirit, declared to his friend, "I am not worthy of martyrdom, but if God granted me that grace, most willingly would I accept it, and I would beseech Him that the greatest possible torments might be inflicted on me; without any doubt I would joyfully die for Him and for His holy Roman Church. Yea, verily, I have no doubt. Trusting in God, and not in myself, I say this, for God has been pleased to bestow upon me the gift of strong faith."

He always greatly rejoiced when he heard that the palm of martyrdom had been conferred on any Christian, and humbled himself before God, as excluded from the white-robed ranks of that immense and heroic army on account of his sins. It was announced to him at Valencia that a certain woman, who had gone on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and had been to him to confession before starting, had been killed in hatred of the Christian faith; and over-

flowing with joy, he exclaimed, "Oh happy woman! if what we hear is true, what a wonderful favour hast thou received from God; a favour which I, a sinner, do not deserve!"

The double love, therefore, of God and his neighbour filled St. Lewis with a desire to abandon his country, his religious brethren, his beloved convent, his work among the novices, and to welcome all the dangers, privations, and sufferings of the foreign missions. Once possessed with this idea, he waited only for some sign that it was God's will he should carry it into execution, and meanwhile he recommended the matter to the Divine Majesty in humble prayer. In the beginning of the year 1562, while the mind of the Saint was full of these noble aspirations, two missionary Fathers arrived in Spain, with permission from the General of the Order to enlist any Fathers who were willing to accompany them as missionaries for the kingdom of New Granada. The arrival of these Fathers, and the lively pictures they drew of the need that existed in those new countries of zealous missionaries, and of the great harvest there awaiting the few labourers who might have sufficient spirit of self-sacrifice to gather it in, increased still more the ardent zeal of St. Lewis. He considered the arrival of these missionaries as sufficient indication of God's will, and to the dismay of his fellow-religious he announced his intention of embarking at once for South America.

It cost him much to accomplish his design, and any less courageous soul would have abandoned the idea in the face of opposition as strong as it was plausible. No one favoured the design. His own family and friends in the world were determined to use every effort to detain him. This, indeed, would have influenced him little, but the feelings of his own family were thoroughly shared by all the Fathers of his Order, and especially by his Superiors. The Prior, after employing every argument to prevent his

departure, told him plainly that he should be provided with nothing for the journey if he persisted in going, and must leave without his blessing. He represented most strongly that he was abandoning the office entrusted to him by his Superiors, and for which God had so eminently fitted him, for new work of his own choosing, in which it was extremely doubtful whether he would succeed.

But, on the other hand, the Saint considered that if he could not succeed in converting a single soul, he could at least offer himself as a victim, and suffer for God, and that would satisfy the longings of his generous heart. To suffer for God was his one passion ; he would suffer more in America than in Spain, was not that enough reason to depart at once ? The novices belonged to God, and for them God would provide ; and if he could die for Jesus Christ, and thus in spite of his grievous sins enter heaven, there he could pray for their welfare.

Then the Prior urged him to remember the weakness of his health. It was evident that God did not intend him, of all others, for the labours of the foreign missions, because He had not given him the health and strength to sustain the immense fatigues and privations that he must endure. He reminded him of his frequent illnesses, of his great debility, of the constant giddiness he suffered in his head, of the extreme weakness of his sight and hearing, of the painful wound in his leg, and asked him whether these were the qualifications necessary for one of the most arduous missions in the world ? Reason seemed entirely on the Prior's side. St. Lewis could not deny that he suffered under many infirmities, and that he had not enjoyed a single day of perfect health since he entered the Order. But on the other hand he well remembered that the same argument had been advanced by his father to prevent him from becoming a Dominican, and yet he had not only been able by God's grace to keep the strict rule, but to endure a

multitude of painful austerities besides. In his own case had he proved that "power is made perfect in weakness," and could not God strengthen him in South America as well as in Valencia? The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, and wherever he might go, God would be present to assist him.

The Prior, however, persisted in refusing him any assistance for the journey, hoping by this means to overcome his resolution, for he felt convinced that the Saint had not strength to reach Seville, the port of embarkation, on foot. This St. Lewis could not deny, and on that account, and partly perhaps being influenced by the Prior's arguments and the entreaties of his brethren, he allowed his companion to start for Seville alone. So far the Prior, Father James Serrano, had triumphed in the contest. His words had more influence with the Saint because he was not only Prior, but on account of his age, being one of the elder Fathers, whom Lewis had venerated from his youth.

If it appears strange that the fact of his being his Superior did not oblige the Saint at once to submit to his judgment, it must be remembered that the Father General, to whom all owe obedience, had given permission to any Father who felt the vocation to become a missionary. On the other hand, however, the words of his Superior could not fail to influence him greatly. His companion, therefore, departed alone for Seville, and the Saint awaited a more favourable opportunity.

Three days afterwards, on the first Friday of Lent, he preached to the people in the church attached to the convent of the Nuns of the Conception, and after the sermon he began to feel exceedingly troubled in conscience at having yielded to the persuasions of his brethren and delayed his departure. Was it not a lack of confidence in God to dread the journey to Seville, although in bad health and without resources? During the day, after much

earnest prayer, his resolution was finally taken. He felt certain of God's will, and no power on earth could then have shaken his constancy. In the evening he assembled the novices, and delivered his farewell discourse, broken with sighs and tears. He exhorted them with burning words to persevere in the love of Jesus Christ, and to be exact in all the observances of the Order, and then declaring his intention to depart, he begged pardon for his faults, asked their prayers, and gave them his parting blessing. They all shed an abundance of bitter tears at the thought of thus losing their beloved Father.

Early in the morning St. Lewis announced to the Prior his renewed intention of departing at once to Seville in spite of every difficulty. The Prior, overcome with sorrow at so grievous a loss, burst into tears, and refused to give his blessing for the journey. Seeing, however, that nothing could alter the determination of the Saint, he at last gave him a reluctant blessing, though his voice was broken with weeping ; but he refused even then to provide either money or any other necessary for the journey. This might appear wanting in charity, but was done under the notion of inducing the Saint to return, and no doubt God allowed this in order that His servant should depart in perfect evangelical poverty. The whole community was loud in lamentations when they discovered the intention of St. Lewis, and like the Christians bidding farewell to St. Paul, "there was much weeping among them all : and falling on his neck they kissed him, being very much grieved for the word which he had said, that they should see his face no more." That was indeed a day of mourning and desolation for the convent of Valencia, for what prospect was there that St. Lewis would ever return alive ? Even if he escaped all the dangers that would surround him, what hope was there that he would ever again reach Valencia ? No one can realise the anguish of losing a Saint, but those

that have possessed a Saint. Many an earnest prayer for resignation was that day offered to God.

Meanwhile, who can fathom the feelings that filled the heart of St. Lewis, as he walked slowly away on that spring morning from his beloved convent, through the streets of his native city, with the sobs of his brethren still piercing his loving heart and their tears still mingling with his own? Humbly he passed along, his eyes cast modestly down, his head bent forward, with two little bags slung over his neck containing a few books and clothes—the whole provision for his journey. He was a Saint, and therefore his whole being leant for support on God alone. He was doing God's will, and that was his whole joy. But still a Saint has feelings and a human heart, and it was not possible to be unmoved on such an occasion, after such a scene of farewell. He was leaving all he loved in this world, his convent home, his religious sons and brethren, and by his departure he was filling their hearts with anguish. He was bidding farewell, as it appeared for ever, to his native country and city, to the churches he had loved as a boy, to the people among whom he had ministered as a priest, to the shrines of St. Vincent and his other favourite saints. He was departing from his early home, from the graves of his parents, without even saying farewell to his brothers who loved him so dearly. He was starting alone, and in miserable health, on a journey of immense length and full of every kind of hardship. He was fasting, and without money or food. Must not the words of the Prior, urging such excellent reasons for remaining at home, have sounded in his ears? But destitute, suffering, and alone, his heart lacerated and his body weak, the present so cheerless and the future so uncertain, yet he possessed God. For God he was sacrificing self, with Christ he was nailed to the cross, and he was content. Thus in sorrow and in pain went forth the apostle to his appointed work. As he

passed through the city gates into the lovely Huerta, he must have felt the cross pressing heavily on his soul. But did not hope whisper the consoling truth contained in the words that form the motto of his life, and were never more perfectly fulfilled than now, *Cum te consumptum putaveris, orieris ut Lucifer*. "When thou shalt think thyself consumed, thou shalt rise like the day-star!"

But the future was hidden from his view. He was going he knew not whither, and could not yet see the multitudes sitting in the shadow of death to whom he was about to appear as the day-star of salvation. He had not celebrated the Holy Sacrifice that morning, and as the convent of the Franciscan Fathers, called St. Mary of Jesus, lay on his road, not far from the city, he determined to halt there, and beg permission to say Mass. His request was joyfully granted; and it can be imagined with what intense devotion he celebrated, making a perfect holocaust of himself, and consecrating to God his journey and his future apostolate.

After the Holy Sacrifice, refreshed in body as well as soul, he began to examine the contents of his little bags, and placing several things aside which he deemed to be superfluous, and begging the Father Guardian to send them for him to the convent in Valencia, he bid farewell to the Franciscans, and started again along the highroad towards Seville.

But to return to the convent. When the novices found that, deprived of their spiritual Father, they were left orphans, they all repaired to the cell which had been occupied by the Saint, in order to secure, if possible, some relics to keep as memorials of their holy master. They discovered a chest in which were many precious treasures in the shape of haircloth, scourges, iron chains, perforated tin plates, and other instruments of penance, of which the Saint always kept an abundant stock. These were the riches the holy man had left behind, and we can well

understand how deeply the sight of them must have moved the novices. Before long the rumour of his departure got abroad in the city, and reached the ears of his own family. His brothers heard the news with the utmost consternation, and immediately started in pursuit, hoping to induce him even now to return.

Meanwhile St. Lewis, walking towards Xativa, the first stage in his journey, a town about nine leagues south of Valencia, was consoled by meeting the very Father who had started from the convent some days before. He had been paying a visit to a kinsman who was seriously ill, and thus had been providentially detained in order to assist St. Lewis on the journey. They arrived at Xativa,\* and here were overtaken by one of the Saint's brothers, who exhausted every argument to prove that he ought at once to return to Valencia. Finding that nothing was of the slightest avail, he bid him a sorrowful farewell, after

\* It may interest the reader to know something of the country St. Lewis traversed, and it is thus described by an intelligent traveller in 1851. Speaking of the journey from Valencia to Xativa (or San Felipe, as it is now called), Mr. Hoskins says, "Our route lay through the rich plain, planted with a variety of trees like a garden. We passed through several villages and observed many others in the distance, looking extremely picturesque, with their large churches ornamented with domes and towers. The irrigation is very remarkable, a perfect network of little channels, and sometimes we saw portions of aqueducts, the work of the Moors. For a long time we saw the lake of Albufera, which extends for about four leagues near the sea. The plain is bounded by fine ranges of mountains, and often the views were pretty of the villages and their groves of palm trees and oranges, and more frequently the carob, olive, and mulberry trees. In the mountains the cultivation of the land exhibits unwearied industry, fields above fields in terraces . . . San Felipe is a clean Moorish-looking place of 16,000 inhabitants. The Romans called the city Selabis, and the Moors gave it the more beautiful name of Xativa; but in the War of Succession Berwick was so enraged at the heroic defence of the people, assisted by 600 English, that he ordered the city to be razed, and changed the name to San Felipe."



forcing him to accept some money for the journey, and buying an ass for him to ride, as it was evidently impossible for him to accomplish the distance on foot. The Saint and his companion continued their journey, of which no details are recorded, and arriving in due course at Seville, found the fleet, about to sail for the Indies, moored in the river.

While St. Lewis is travelling slowly and painfully to Seville, it will be well to mention an incident which must have happened some time before he left Valencia, but after he had intended to become a missionary. For some years a youth named Castellon had desired to enter the Order of St. Dominic, and St. Lewis had always encouraged him in his desire to consecrate himself to the divine service. Hearing that the Saint was going to South America, Castellon entreated that he might accompany his spiritual Father. Upon this St. Lewis led him into the church and solemnly addressed him thus:—"You tell me that you desire to become a religious of the Order of St. Dominic, and to accompany me to South America; but you mistake your vocation; you will remain here, and be clothed in the habit of another Order." The young man was astonished to hear a prediction so contrary to all his desires, and began to remonstrate; but the Saint replied, "You may be perfectly certain that what I now say will prove true." And, in fact, Castellon, though his whole attraction had so long been towards the Dominican Order, took afterwards the habit of St. Francis.

St. Lewis was not long in Seville, for the American fleet set sail almost immediately on his arrival. Little is known about the voyage, though it was at that time an undertaking of no small difficulty and danger to cross the broad Atlantic. There were no steamships luxuriously fitted up to supply on the waves the conveniences of home life, and a voyage could not but entail many hardships and dangers. The crew of the vessel in which St.

Lewis sailed soon discovered that their passenger was no ordinary man, and the officers as well as the sailors entertained deep veneration for his person, and consulted him on every occasion of difficulty. When a storm was raging they had more confidence in the prayers of St. Lewis than in their own seamanship. He himself was employed, during the long voyage, in prayer and instructing the sailors in their religious duties. The feeling of reverence for him was much increased by the following event. A heavy block of wood fell from the mast, and striking one of the Dominican Fathers on the head, he fell stunned and motionless on the deck. All feared that the accident was fatal, and the surgeons at once proceeded to cut away the hair in order to dress the wound. St. Lewis, however, assured them that no operation would be necessary, and they need only apply bandages saturated with water, and the patient would recover. Out of respect to the Saint, they followed his advice, and carried the religious to a cabin, where he remained insensible until the following morning. He then revived, and, opening his eyes, saw the Saint near him and bending his head towards him, and rising immediately, he went on deck. The captain was astounded at seeing him walking the deck when he was thought to be dying below, and he exclaimed, "Go down, my Father; your life will be in danger if you thus expose yourself after such an injury." The Friar could not account for this anxiety, as he felt perfectly well, and was unconscious of the accident which had so gravely endangered his life; but feeling the bandages still on his head, he tore them off, and to the amazement of all the terrible wound was completely healed; all vestige of it had disappeared.



## Part II.

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### THE APOSTOLATE.

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"And I saw another Angel flying through the midst of heaven, having the eternal Gospel, to preach unto them that sit upon the earth, and over every nation and tribe, and tongue and people."—*Apocalypse*, xiv. 6.

"O Lamp of the New World exceeding bright! Holy Lewis, who, by announcing the Gospel of Christ to the Indies, didst merit to become partaker of the glory of the Apostles! be ever a loving Intercessor for us with God, Who chose thee."—*Antiphon at the Magnificat for First Vespers for the feast of St. Lewis*.



## Part II.



### CHAPTER I.

#### SOUTH AMERICAN MISSIONS BEFORE THE TIME OF ST. LEWIS.

Columbus and the Dominicans—First Missionaries—St. Domingo—Father Antony Montesino—Las Casas—Mission to Venezuela—Province of the Holy Cross—Province of St. Antoninus—St. Martha—Discovery of New Granada—Missionary toils—Dominic de Las Casas—Father Peter de Miranda, Vicar-General—Father Gregory Beteta—St. Lewis arrives in 1562 at Carthagena.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, of them that bring glad tidings of good things!"—ROM. x. 15, ISAIAH lii. 7.

"Yea, verily, their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world."—ROM. x. 18, PSALM xviii. 5.



WHILE St. Lewis is tossing on the Atlantic waves in the fleet of galleons bound for Carthagena, it will be interesting to describe as briefly as possible the state of the Dominican Missions in South America up to his time. It would be impossible, even if desirable, to give more than a rapid sketch of this interesting history, a detailed account of which would be foreign to the matter in hand, and would require volumes in place of a few brief pages.

Christopher Columbus sailed from the harbour of Palos on that memorable voyage which resulted in the discovery

of the New World, on the Feast of St. Dominic in the year 1492. Amidst all the difficulty and discouragement that the Admiral had to encounter before his grand design could be achieved, it is pleasant to remember that the Dominican Fathers showed him the warmest sympathy, raised his hopes in the darkest moments, and assisted him in every way within their power. Las Casas writes, that he had himself seen a letter of Columbus in which with all the generosity of a truly great soul, he expresses his sense of the obligation he was under to F. Diego de Deza, a Dominican Master of Theology, and tutor to one of the royal princes.

"Their Catholic Majesties must remember," wrote the Admiral, "that if they are now rulers of the West Indies, they owe this rich possession to Father Diego de Deza."

The interest in the New World thus shown by the Dominicans before its existence had been certainly ascertained was immensely increased after so vast a field of missionary enterprise was actually discovered. Such were the labours of the first zealous missionaries that evangelised it in all directions that Pope Clement X., in a Bull published in 1671, declared that "the Order of St. Dominic appeared to have received, as an inheritance from heaven, the glorious mission of bringing the great American nation to the knowledge of the true God and to the fold of the Roman Church."

It was the celebrated Convent of St. Stephen in Salamanca that had the honour to give Columbus the shelter of its roof and the sympathy of its inmates during the weary time before his first voyage, and it was the same convent that sent the first Dominican missionaries to the New World. Father Thomas de Vio Cajetan was Master General of the Order, and at their own petition he despatched Father Peter de Cordova as Superior, with three companions, to the island of Hispaniola or St. Domingo, now called by the original name Hayti. The names of the three who formed Father Peter's Community were F. Dominic de

Mendoza, F. Bernard of St. Dominic, and F. Antony de Montesino, a name famous as that of the first preacher who spoke in defence of the persecuted Indians. These Religious landed in St. Domingo in September 1510.

Without being able to give a history of the Spanish settlement of St. Domingo, it is necessary to explain that the Fathers found that the natives they had come to convert were fast disappearing, on account of the hardships they were compelled to endure in the relentless service of their conquerors. A system had arisen by which the King, and the Governor of the Colony in his name, ceded large districts of land to the Spaniards, and with them a certain number of natives to work for the owner, and to be practically his slaves. This was called the system of "Repartimientos" or Departments. A Department was an estate granted to a colonist, who derived from it all the profit he could grind out of the forced labour of the natives. Often the owners were noblemen residing in Spain, who intrusted the whole management of their Departments to agents who were unscrupulous adventurers, utterly careless of the sufferings endured by the natives as long as money was forthcoming. The system of Departments, unjustifiable in itself, was rendered far more detestable by many of the agents of these absentee landlords.

Wise and merciful regulations were made in abundance by the King and the Home Government; but in practice they were ignored, and the immense distance of the Colonies and the difficulty of communication made it impossible to enforce them. The natives were treated with the utmost cruelty. Weak and feeble as they were and unused to toil, the ill treatment combined with hard and exhausting labour soon reduced their numbers; and at the time the Dominicans arrived, not more than 15,000 remained of the poor original inhabitants, who, simply because they were defenceless, had not only been deprived of the island of which they



had been the undisputed possessors, but had been, moreover, reduced to a state of the most execrable slavery.

When the Dominican Fathers had been long enough in St. Domingo to realise this iniquitous state of affairs, they determined to oppose the whole system of "Departments;" or, to speak plainly, of slavery, and thus constitute themselves the protectors of the natives they desired to convert. They saw at once that the real obstacle to their work would be found in the conduct of the Spaniards. The whole history of their noble combat in the cause of right will be found, with all its interesting details, in "The History of the Spanish Conquest of America," by Sir Arthur Helps, or in "The Life of Las Casas," by the same author.

Father Antony Montesino was the mouthpiece of the other Fathers who were all united on this momentous question.

A few months after their arrival in 1511, Father Antony solemnly denounced the whole system of enslaving the natives with all the power of natural eloquence, excited to the highest pitch by his indignation at the cruelty and injustice he had witnessed. This sermon, preached in the principal church of St. Domingo before the Governor and the chief officers of the Colony, raised a storm of anger against the Friar who had thus dared to condemn so lucrative a practice. Complaints were made to his Superior, Father Peter of Cordova, who approved of the sermon and defended the preacher.

War was thus declared between the Dominicans and the officials who defended the system of Departments. Letters were despatched to the Spanish Court, and the Friars, to defend themselves and obtain justice for the natives, sent Father Antony Montesino to plead their cause before the King. Meanwhile the Fathers left at St. Domingo continued to denounce the slavery of the natives as a flagrant injustice repugnant to the laws of God and man, and

declared that they would administer the Holy Sacraments to no one, whatever his rank or dignity, who participated in this crime.

On the arrival of the Envoys in Spain, King Ferdinand summoned a great Council to debate the question, and commanded the presence of the most eminent Doctors of both civil and canon law to assist the deliberations. Montesino spoke with great energy and force, and after long dispute and many speeches it was decided that the Indians, as they were called, were free men and had a right to all the privileges of free subjects of Spain, but yet by a fatal inconsistency the iniquitous system of Departments was allowed to continue.

There was one man in particular whose name will be for ever illustrious for his noble devotion in the cause of the enslaved West Indians, and who thoroughly supported the efforts of the Dominicans in their favour, and this was Bartholomew de las Casas, then a secular priest in St. Domingo. He was a native of Seville, born in 1474, and went out to St. Domingo in 1502 in the suite of Don Nicolas Dorando, the Governor of that Island. He at first possessed a "Department" himself, but soon becoming convinced that the slavery of the defenceless natives was a crying injustice, at once resigned his holding and emancipated all the Indians who had fallen to his share. From this time, until his death in 1566, at the age of ninety-two, he never ceased to labour for the freedom of the natives. On five different occasions he braved the dangers of the voyage to Europe in order to plead their cause himself before the Spanish Court. He was constituted formally the "Protector of the Indians," by Cardinal Ximenes, and proved himself well worthy of the title by his unflagging zeal in their defence.

At the age of forty-seven, in 1521, he received the habit of St. Dominic from Father Peter de Cordova, and after

his profession made missionary journeys of great length in Peru, Mexico, and Guatemala, everywhere working for the double object of the conversion of the souls and the protection of the liberty of the natives.

On one of his visits to Spain, in 1544, after obtaining new edicts from the Emperor Charles V. in favour of the Indians, he was obliged, against his will, to receive Episcopal Consecration in the Cathedral of Seville as Bishop of Chiapa.

He started from Spain for his See with forty-four Fathers of his own Order, and after renewed efforts for the defence of the Natives, he resigned his Bishopric, returned to Spain, and occupied the remaining days of his long and eventful career in writing books calculated to promote that grand cause of freedom and justice to which his whole life had been devoted.

All that can be hoped for from this mention of the labours of Las Casas is, that the interest of some who may not be acquainted with his life may be sufficiently awakened to induce them to read it, for few biographies could be found more interesting and instructive.

The first Dominican convent of the New World—that in the island of St. Domingo—was erected in 1512, the year after Montesino's memorable sermon, and it was dedicated under the title of the Holy Cross. Its church was the most magnificent in the island. The convent, according to the account of one of the historians of the Order, was a model of regular discipline and fervour, and thus trained zealous missionaries for their arduous work.

Diligence in prayer and work, the love and practice of penance and rigorous poverty, the service of the choir by day and night, even when two religious only were in the house; in one word, all those observances of regular life found in Communities the most numerous, and of discipline the most severe, were the foundation-stones

and the glorious first-fruits of the Convent of Holy Cross. This convent became, therefore, not only the model of the whole Province to which it gave its name, but a school in which the Religious arriving from Europe might remain not only to rest after the fatiguing journey and to learn the Indian languages, but also to be edified and instructed by the examples of Apostolic virtue to be seen there."

In 1515 the houses attached to and founded from the Convent of Holy Cross had become so numerous, that the Religious desired to see them erected into a distinct Province, but it was not until 1530 that the affair was arranged. The General Chapter of that year erected the houses of the West Indies into a separate Province under the title of the Province of Holy Cross, and appointed Father Thomas de Berlanga as the first Provincial, who, later became Bishop of Panama.

This Province of Holy Cross was the parent stock from which, in course of time, many other South American Provinces sprung, in Mexico, Peru, Chili, and New Granada. It was founded during the infancy of St. Lewis, thirty-two years before his arrival in South America.

The interesting history of the foundation of the Province of Mexico must be passed over in silence, as also that of Peru, to which Blessed John Massias and Blessed Martin Porrez belonged ; but the Province of St. Antoninus in New Granada, to which St. Lewis belonged while in South America, requires more particular mention.

In 1525, the year before St. Lewis was born, twenty Religious, with Father Thomas Ortiz, afterwards the first Bishop of St. Martha, embarked at Cadiz in the war-ship "St. Joseph," and sailed for the Isle of Santo Domingo. Among them were Father Jerome de Loaysa, first Bishop of Carthagená and afterwards Archbishop of Lima ; Father Gregory de Beteta, one of Father Jerome's successors in

the See of Carthagera ; Father Dominic de Salazar, who was at a later period Bishop in the Philippine Islands ; and Father John Mendez, who succeeded Ortiz in the See of Saint Martha.

After a stay of three years at Santo Domingo, the "St. Joseph" again sailed towards the south-west, and the land shortly discovered was named St. Martha in honour of the Saint on whose festival it was first sighted. Without any resistance from the natives, Rodriguez de Bastidas, the captain of the expedition, took possession of the territory in the name of the Spanish Sovereign, and the missionaries erected an altar and celebrated Mass in presence of a number of astonished Indians. The site of the city of St. Martha was immediately chosen near the river Gaira, as there a natural harbour existed protected by lofty ridges ; and such was the rapidity with which it sprung, as though by enchantment, from the ground, that in two years Pope Clement VII., at the request of the Emperor Charles V., erected there an Episcopal See, and appointed Father Thomas Ortiz as first Bishop. The district, of which this city is the capital, extends about 300 miles in length and 200 in breadth, and is extremely mountainous, forming part of the Caracca range—some of the St. Martha peaks being as much as 16,000 feet above the sea level. This city was destroyed by the English Admiral Sir Francis Drake in 1596 ; and at the present day is in a miserable condition, with scarcely any commerce and only 6000 inhabitants.

Having utilised their time at Santo Domingo by learning the language, the Fathers were able to begin at once their work of conversion ; and before long multitudes of the poor Indians, gentle and unoffending though so ignorant, embraced the faith and were baptized. A church and convent were erected in St. Martha, and formed the centre from which arduous but eminently successful missionary excursions

were made into the interior in various directions. Wherever they were able to form a missionary station, they erected little buildings, of rude structure indeed, but still sufficient to protect them from the burning sun when instructing the natives who flocked to hear the Word of God, and afterwards they passed on to other districts. The next Father found the buildings left by his predecessor, and thus one would plant, another water, and a third gather the harvest.

But this prosperous commencement was overshadowed before long by a cloud, arising with sad monotony from the same source as in other Colonies—the insatiable greed for gold which filled the Spanish soldiers. Many of these were adventurers of a low class, with no higher aspiration than to enrich themselves from the spoils of the miserable natives. Rodriguez de Bastidas was a man of superior merit, but his soldiers were unruly marauders, who, when they discovered that their captain was determined to restrain their lawless pursuit of gold and their cruelty to the Indians, rebelled against his authority and compelled him to return wounded to St. Domingo.

He was succeeded in the command of the Colony by Garcia de Lerma, a brave soldier, but whose only principle appears to have been to enrich himself as much and as speedily as possible at the expense of the natives of the country he was appointed to govern. He seems to have possessed the same extraordinary notion that caused such tyranny in lands nearer home—that the nation belonged to the King, and that he reigned for his own benefit, and not for that of his subjects, instead of the Governor being the servant of the people, to study their interest according to the principles of Christianity; as the Pope, though Supreme Ruler, is styled “The Servant of the Servants of God.”

Happily Lerma did not find all the Indians so easy a prey to his cupidity as he imagined. Against the advice of the Dominicans who had visited them, he made a maraud-

ing expedition, burning and slaying as he went, into the territory of a tribe, rich indeed but warlike, on the right bank of the Magdalena. The natives, instead of quietly submitting to be pillaged and butchered, flew to arms, fell upon the Spaniards, completely routed them, and few returned to St. Martha.

This affair disturbed the whole Colony. Other Indian tribes, not so warlike, were filled with terror lest their districts might be the next to be invaded. The work of the Gospel of Peace was impeded by the demon of avarice and cruelty. Father Thomas Ortiz finding remonstrance useless, determined to return at once to Spain to invoke the aid of the Sovereign. At that moment the Governor Garcia died; and the other officers, having learnt a lesson by the recent defeat, combined with the missionaries to quiet the people; and the confidence of the natives that had been so rudely shaken was partially, at least, restored.

In 1533 the colonial possessions of Spain on this coast received further development. Peter de Heredia sailed with a well-equipped expedition, along the shore, towards the Isthmus of Panama, and landed about 180 miles from St. Martha without opposition from the aborigines. Finding an islet in a large bay, he selected it for the site of a city, and it became the famous port of Carthagena. It was founded on the island, and wooden bridges connected it with the mainland. The site was chosen with admirable judgment. A harbour, the most secure and capacious of any in Spanish South America, was easily formed, and to that circumstance Carthagena owed its early importance. It had become well known ten years after its foundation; but after it was appointed, on account of its harbour, as the port to which the galleons from Spain first proceeded and from whence they started on their homeward voyage, it rapidly assumed great commercial importance. "It soon became," says Robertson, "one of the most populous, opulent, and

beautiful cities in South America." It can boast of a Cathedral of considerable size and beauty.

Two Dominican Fathers accompanied Peter de Heredia on his voyage of discovery, and they immediately laid the foundations of what was afterwards a magnificent church in honour of St. Dominic. These two Religious were quickly joined by several from St. Martha, who brought with them a large number of converted Indians, whose presence and help would, it was hoped, greatly facilitate the work of conversion in the new district.

This work immediately began, and bid fair to prosper. Meanwhile Peter de Heredia made a marauding expedition into the interior, and returned laden with booty, for that country yielded precious stones and gold in abundance, and the treasures laid up by the Indians who little understood their value were ruthlessly plundered. The intelligence of their success attracted crowds of freebooters, who, regardless of everything except plunder, enslaved the natives—whether Christians or not, and even despoiled the tombs of their ornaments of gold. The Dominicans at once despatched Father Jerome de Loaysa to represent the condition of affairs to the Emperor, and shortly after his departure Father Thomas de Toro arrived in Carthagená as its first Bishop.

The new Prelate found everything in confusion, and the work of conversion impossible. But he acted with promptitude and courage. He strongly represented to the Governor that to allow the persecution of the natives was not only a plain violation of the Divine Law, but most detrimental to the interests of the Colony, and an open contempt of the edicts of the Emperor; but finding at last that remonstrance was useless, he solemnly declared the Governor to be excommunicated, and despatched an explanation of the affair to the Emperor.

Charles V. approved of the rigorous measures of the



Bishop, and ordered the licentiate Bobadilla to examine the conduct of the Governor, and to punish offenders rigorously. The licentiate threw Peter de Heredia with his brother Alphonsus into prison and confiscated his goods, to the satisfaction of all right-minded men, but alas for human weakness! after this laudable act of justice he walked himself in the very path of the malefactors he had punished, robbed the natives in the most unjustifiable manner and sold numbers into slavery!

The good Bishop de Toro, worn out with anxiety and with anguish at the sufferings of his flock, died in 1536, leaving as an inheritance to the Dominicans in the solemn words of his dying moments the office of protecting the natives.

Father Jerome de Loaysa was appointed his successor, and was eminently fitted for the difficult office not only by his approved virtue but on account of the experience he had gained during his five years' mission in St. Martha. The new Bishop reached Carthagena with a goodly band of missionaries of his own and other Orders in 1537, and immediately sent them to various parts, while he himself laboured in Carthagena. In 1538 he finished the Cathedral and dedicated it under the invocation of St. Catherine the Martyr, and not long after he opened the new Convent of St. Joseph, and in 1539 Father Joseph Robles and a small community took possession of it.

Peter de Heredia had been formerly a friend of the new Bishop, who now considering that the ex-governor had learnt wisdom by the punishment he had received, obtained his release and that of his brother Alphonsus, hoping that in gratitude they would assist him in the projects he had in hand. Nor was he disappointed. The two brothers reinstated in their former honourable positions were guided by the advice of the Bishop, and this good understanding was most beneficial to the whole Colony. Peace remained

uninterrupted, trade began to flourish, buildings of all kinds increased, and the natives, gaining confidence, attended the instructions of the missionaries and were converted in considerable numbers. The Bishop was endeavouring to supply clergy learned and zealous for his vast diocese, by establishing in Carthagena a college after the model of the celebrated Propaganda in Rome, when he was translated to the See of Lima, of which he was the first Archbishop, in 1543. He died at Lima in 1575.

It now only remains to give some account of the inland portion of New Granada, of which St. Lewis is styled the Apostle. It had been learnt from the Indians that some hundreds of leagues inland south of St. Martha there were countries of great extent and full of riches, and the success of Cortes and Pizarro having stirred up all the love of adventure and desire of gain in the minds of the Spanish freelances, many were anxious to explore the interior of the vast continent. They wanted a leader; and a suitable one, well qualified for the dangerous enterprise, soon presented himself in the person of Gonzalo Ximenes de Quesada, whom Robertson considers one "of the bravest and most accomplished officers employed in the conquest of America." He started from the coast in 1536, with only eight hundred men, and in his company went two Dominican Fathers, Dominic de Las Casas and Peter Zembrano. Their object was to minister to the spiritual needs of the Spanish soldiers, and to endeavour to plant the standard of the Cross in the newly-discovered kingdom.

After eight months of incessant labour, endured with indomitable perseverance, the expedition arrived on an elevated tableland of immense extent, well populated and giving manifest signs of the long-coveted wealth. It is curious to picture to the mind the astonishment and mysterious dread that must have filled the minds of the poor ignorant natives, at the sudden apparition of the

Spaniards. To hear that a body of men, utter strangers, different to any they had ever seen, clothed in strange attire, wielding terrible weapons, even bearing thunder and lightning in their hands, riding on extraordinary animals, for the horse was unknown before their arrival—how astounding all this must have been to the simple natives !

The paleness, ghastly in their eyes, of the countenances of these extraordinary men must have increased their amazement. And then the question would arise, Whence come these wonderful strangers ? Have they sprung out of the earth ? Out of the caverns of the sea ? Did they fall from the sky ? The last appeared to them the more likely, and they called their unbidden guests "the children of the Sun." Perhaps the inhabitants of Bogota, as the inland plateau the Spaniards had now gained was called, had heard rumours of the sudden appearance of the mysterious strangers on the coasts, exaggerated as these reports would be on their journey up the country. They had probably heard of their valour and strength, their terrible weapons and the prance of their war-steeds, and now after years of apprehension here they were. Hunters had seen them in the far-off forests slowly advancing, had listened, concealed, to their unintelligible language, and had seen them kill a jaguar or an antelope, at a long distance, with their fire-vomiting weapon, and had brought the fearful intelligence of their approach. And now they had arrived. No wonder the natives received them kindly, endeavoured to propitiate them, hardly knowing whether they had to deal with mortal men or beings of a higher order. Watching their movements, they see two figures, in a distinctive garb of white and black, choosing with evident care a spot of rising ground and planting there a wooden banner—not a flag,—but an upright beam of wood, with another fixed upon it. For the first time they see the symbol of salvation. Then they see an altar erected, and knowing full well some

religious rite is proceeding, they are unconsciously present at the adorable Sacrifice. Then with touching simplicity which is most pathetic, they greet the strangers as "children of the Sun."

Children of the Sun! Surely this name by which the Indians welcomed them must have reminded the Spaniards that God had delivered these people into their hands not to slay, or plunder, or enslave, but to give them spiritual life, the riches of God's mercy and the freedom of the children of Christ.

The Dominicans felt this most strongly, and their compassion for the Indians and their desire to convert them redoubled.

To them this name was appropriate, for their one intention was to enlighten this people sitting in darkness with the rays of the Sun of Justice.

After sending back the sick and wounded, by canoes on the Magdalena, under charge of Father Zembrano, Quesada pressed on towards the south, and was well received by the inhabitants of a large town where the houses afforded proof of considerable civilisation. Here Father Dominic de las Casas had the satisfaction of erecting a Cross in the Temple of the Sun. Missionaries coming some years afterwards discovered this Cross still standing, and the natives told them it had been placed there by one of the children of the Sun.

Father las Casas would fain have lingered here to teach the docile people the Christian Faith, but Quesada was anxious to proceed, and travelling over the fertile and lovely plain they reached the town of Suesugca, thirty miles from the capital Bogota. The King of Bogota had been informed by spies of the approach of the invaders, and the report was that the strangers could not be immortal, for many were sick and some dead, and even the monsters, by which was meant the horses, had died. The

Indians imagined at first that the horses and riders were one monster, like the Centaurs of mythology, and that they devoured men alive, and these romances naturally increased their awe of the pale-faced strangers.

But the King of Bogota was no coward. He determined to resist, and caused himself to be conveyed to the scene of action on a golden litter to superintend operations. But his troops were so terrified by the firearms, that they were soon driven back in disorder, and the king was obliged to seek refuge behind the fortifications of his capital. After many murderous combats Quesada, taking possession of the place, entered triumphantly in April 1537.

The riches found in Bogota exceeded even the sanguine expectations of the Spaniards. Gold was so abundant that they groomed their horses with golden instead of iron instruments. The district yields gold and precious stones of different kinds, in abundance. The gold is near the surface, and only requires, by washing, to be separated from the soil. Some parts of the country afford a copious supply of the precious metal even to this day.

Unhappily the conduct of the Spanish soldiers prevented the zealous preaching of Father Dominic las Casas from producing much effect. How could he convince the natives of the holiness of that Christian religion, the only representatives of which they had ever known were men versed in every iniquity, who came among them to pillage their cities, violate their homes, burn their houses, and massacre their chiefs?

In spite, however, of this discouragement, the heroic missionary laboured incessantly, endeavouring in every way to protect the Indians, to win their confidence, and to instruct them in religion.

Quesada commenced the foundation of the city which received the name of Santa-Fé-de-Bogota, on the site of the summer residence of the poor dethroned king, where the

land is fertile, water abundant, and building materials at hand. The climate all over the vast inland plateau is mild and genial, in spite of its southern position near the equator, on account of its great altitude. It stands, according to Humboldt, more than 8000 feet above the sea level. When Father Las Casas saw the foundations of the city laid, he petitioned Quesada for a site on which a future church and convent could be erected. The request was granted, an ample property was allotted to him, and he began at once to build a church in which the Holy Sacrifice could be offered. On the feast of the Transfiguration, 1538, he had the happiness of celebrating the first Mass in the new structure, and preached a sermon full of apostolic freedom, pointing out the duty of the Spaniards towards the natives, reprobating strongly all oppressive acts. This little church was the humble beginning of the future Convent of the Rosary, of which St. Lewis was elected Prior just before his return to Europe.

In the beginning of 1539 a terrible danger threatened the infant colony. Sebastian de Belalcazar, proceeding inland from Quito, which he had conquered, appeared on the confines of Bogota, and claimed the kingdom as belonging to Pizarro since it was within the boundaries assigned by the Spanish government to the kingdom of Peru. Quesada refused to yield the possessions he had acquired at such sacrifice, and civil war seemed imminent. The danger was only averted by F. Dominic de las Casas going as Ambassador to Belalcazar. After this signal service Father Las Casas did not long remain in Bogota. He returned to Spain, and after a holy death was buried at Seville.

He was replaced by Father John Mendez, who left St. Martha with a fair number of missionaries. He distributed them to different missions, while he, himself, with a companion remained at Santa-Fé, and laboured with such marvellous success that in little more than two years nearly all

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the natives were converted. He purified the Temple of the Sun and changed it into a magnificent church. Afterwards he was obliged to leave his favourite work of preaching and instructing, in order to return to St. Martha, for he had been appointed the second Bishop of that See. Often the concourse of natives at his instructions was so large that he was obliged to collect them in the public square of the city.

While Father Mendez was thus evangelising Bogota, the other Fathers were carrying on the same holy work in various towns and districts in the kingdom. A writer gives this account of the converts:—"Nothing could be more touching and edifying than the sight of these new Christians. They only remembered their idols and the cruel sacrifices of their former religion to loath them, and their union and fraternal charity recalled that of the Christians of apostolic times."

For twenty years the Religious in the kingdom of New Granada had no regular convent, but were all living in detached stations, covering the country with a large number of small churches and houses of instruction for the conversion of the natives. They were governed by the Provincial of Peru, but the distance at which he resided, and the anxieties of his own Province, rendered him unable to superintend the missions of New Granada. The arrangement was felt to be so inconvenient that in 1551, the General Chapter, which met at Salamanca, associated the missionaries of New Granada into a separate congregation under the patronage of St. Antoninus, and appointed F. Peter de Miranda as Vicar-General. He arrived at St. Martha in January 1552, and after visiting the missionary stations, he clearly recognised the necessity of establishing convents which would be the centres of missionary enterprise, and to which the Religious could withdraw to renew their own spirit, and enjoy the advantages of regular

observance. The first effect of this wise determination was the erection of a large Convent of Observance, on the site of the little house built by Father las Casas at Santa-Fé-de-Bogota. Under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary, it became the head-quarters of the Order in New Granada, and a flourishing university was before long established. Other convents were gradually erected by the zealous Provincial, and the smaller stations were supplied with well-trained and capable missionaries.

One missionary in New Granada deserves particular mention, a man of transcendent merit—Father Gregory Beteta ; after twenty-five years of unremitting toil, making long journeys, which were rewarded with numerous conversions, he was appointed Bishop of Carthagená. Twice he wrote to Europe imploring to be relieved of the burden, but without avail. The diocese prospered greatly under his government, but finding the weight of the Episcopal charge intolerable, he at last journeyed in person to Rome to resign his dignity at the feet of the Pope. When only a few miles distant from Rome he received news that the Holy Father had accepted his resignation, and rejoicing at the happy tidings he did not even enter Rome, but hurried away to the Convent of St. Peter Martyr, in Toledo, where he lived in solitude, humility, and prayer, till his death in 1562.

Such was the state of the Province when St. Lewis arrived in Carthagená. The fleet cast anchor, after a long and tedious voyage, in the harbour of Carthagená in the year 1562, and St. Lewis repaired at once to the Convent of St. Joseph in that city, and placed himself at the disposal of the Vicar General, Father Peter de Miranda. For some time he remained quietly at St. Joseph's, as the Vicar considered a period of rest necessary after the fatigues of the voyage. This time Lewis occupied chiefly in prayer and penance as a preparation for his missionary career.



To complete the sketch of the foundation of the Province of St. Antoninus, it will be interesting to mention that the General Chapter celebrated in Rome in the year 1577 passed a decree declaring the congregation of St. Antoninus a distinct Province, entirely independent of the Province of Lima, and appointed Father Antony de la Peña, a venerable religious of most holy life, who had laboured for thirty years in the kingdom of New Granada, to be the first Provincial.

## CHAPTER II.

### LABOURS IN CARTHAGENA.

Scarcity of Materials—Reasons—Difficulty of obtaining Information from Lewis—Gift of Tongues—A Trial—Mission in Panama—Strict Poverty—Wonderful Food—Dangers—Gift of Prophecy—Instances—A Calumny—Prophecies.

“Tongues are for a sign, not to believers, but to unbelievers. . . . I thank my God I speak with all your tongues.”—1 COR. xiv. 22, 18.

“Going preach, saying, The kingdom of God is at hand. Do not possess gold, nor silver, nor money in your purses; nor scrip for your journey; nor two coats, nor shoes, nor a staff.”—ST. MATT. x. 7, 9, 10.

**T**HE first remark to be made regarding the career of St. Lewis in New Granada is, that lamentably few and scanty are the records of his labours and apostolic journeys. Little more than detached notices of different events have been preserved, and it is difficult to be certain even of the places in which he preached. No author of his life seems to have even attempted to describe his mission in any systematic way, but to have contented himself with merely mentioning different wonderful facts, that do little more than increase our regret that we do not possess more ample information.

One reason of this dearth of details, that would be so deeply interesting and so full of edification, may be doubtless found in the fact that the Saint travelled generally alone, without even one companion, and he would have been the last to think it necessary to record what he had done and endured for the glory of God. The Father who seeth in

secret knew all, and this was enough. There are many striking points of resemblance between St. Lewis and St. Francis Xavier, but in one thing they unfortunately differ. St. Francis wrote a large number of most fascinating letters, whereas St. Lewis never seems to have written one. It is tantalising to think what he could have told us, if only he had in this imitated St. Francis.

But still it is undeniable that much is lost which might have been preserved if more pains had been taken to collect materials before the remembrance of the holy missionary had died out in South America. We can therefore fully sympathise with Father Antist when he breaks forth into the following lament: "Would that many other things done by this Servant of God in the Indies had been recorded; but hitherto we are ignorant of them, nor I fear shall we ever know them, except in Heaven! chiefly because we Friars of St. Dominic generally neglect to inform the world of the things done by our own Order. Wherefore I have little hope that the Fathers of our Province will become acquainted with the things done by Father Lewis. In good truth, I have often felt grieved when I have heard Father Lewis Bertrand relating some remarkable things concerning some of our Fathers, for instance Father Dominic Betanzos, for I could not help foreseeing that the actions of Father Lewis himself would probably be forgotten and remain unrecorded like those of others. Father Lewis Bertrand used to praise very much the diligence of the Jesuit Fathers, who took care that the labours of their missionaries in Japan and China, and in other places where they had preached the gospel, should not be forgotten, while, at the same time, he blamed the neglect with which we have suffered the labours of our Fathers in the West and the East Indies, in Ceylon, in Guinea, and in many other regions to remain unknown. Scarcely any one of us has cared to write an account of the sufferings and martyr-

doms of our Fathers, but we have left them to be known in the next world only, and, for myself, I can say that whatever knowledge I have of these matters has been derived either from secular people or from Religious of other Orders, but not from our own Fathers."

This indifference which Antist regrets seems to have been part of the character of the Order from the very beginning, and no doubt it has a favourable side, and is not entirely blameworthy. The companions of St. Dominic himself were reproached for leaving his body so long in the humble sepulchre he had desired, "under the feet of his brethren," and for not exerting themselves to promote his canonisation. Their reply was highly characteristic, "The sanctity of Master Dominic is known to God." This was no doubt admirable detachment from human glory, but still the glory of God in his Saints and the edification of the Faithful demand that we should make known the marvels that the Divine Goodness has wrought in His chosen ones, and according to the command of the Angel to Tobias, "Bless God, and publish all His wonderful works" (Tobias xii. 22).

Thoroughly, therefore, as we may sympathise with Father Antist in his lamentations, it is impossible to help being slightly impatient with him also. Though a debt of deep gratitude is owing to him for his life of St. Lewis, and especially for his account of the last illness, which is full of precious details, still no one is more vague about the apostolate in South America, while, at the same time, no one could ever again have the same opportunity of gaining accurate information. His reader is therefore tempted to exclaim, It is very well to complain, Reverend Father, but did not you live yourself in the same Province, and often in the same convent, with Father Lewis for nearly twelve years after his return from South America? What a golden opportunity for collecting information from his

own mouth;—at least you might have discovered exactly where he had preached.

But probably Father Antist would have defended himself on the plea that it was by no means an easy matter to induce Lewis to talk about anything that might seem to savour of self-praise, or to relate anything that might increase the esteem entertained for him.

If Father Antist had pressed the Saint to furnish him with some detailed account of his American mission, he would probably have received some answer as little satisfactory as that given to a friend, perhaps, indeed, Antist himself, who did endeavour to elicit some such information concerning the Divine favours bestowed on the Saint. This friend was persevering, for he continued to repeat his questions day after day, but the only reply was, "Really, Father, I remember nothing to tell you except my sins." The good man, to whom we cannot help being grateful for his praiseworthy, if fruitless, efforts, still persisted, and pleaded that his desire was to commit these things to writing for the instruction of others.

Perhaps he could not have said anything less likely to gain his point. The humility of the Saint at once took alarm. "They have Moses and the Prophets," he replied, "let them hear them." He added in a solemn tone, "Lucifer knew more heavenly secrets than I do, yet was he cast out of heaven. Judas was an Apostle and worked miracles, yet he fell away, hanged himself, burst asunder, and was buried in hell."—"But," urged the other, "these things will at least be useful to me, for I am but a beginner in God's service."—"Is that all you desire?" replied Lewis: "throw yourself then at the feet of Jesus Christ crucified. I promise to tell you more things than you imagine, but you should know that the wonderful things you desire to know do not profit me so much, since I know not whether I am in the grace of God or not.

Certainly, extraordinary things do happen to me every day, but I do not place too much reliance on them, because I know not from what spirit they proceed. One thing, however, I do know—that unless God extends great mercy to me I shall be condemned. This favour I earnestly beg of God, that having received the Last Sacraments of Holy Church, I may die in humility.” What came of this promise of the Saint does not appear, but his answer reveals to us something of his profound humility, and makes it evident how difficult it must have been to induce him to describe what he had done in New Granada.

In spite, however, of our ignorance of details enough is happily known of the seven years spent by Lewis in America to excite our utmost admiration. We know something at least of his labours and sufferings, of the dangers he encountered, the penance he practised, and the extreme poverty he willingly embraced, together with his constant prayer and that charity which prompted him to seek out and save the poor natives in their forests. The miracles he wrought are indeed wonderful, but when we consider the heroic nature of his virtues, they cease to be surprising, since God never suffers Himself to be outdone in generosity. The most wondrous of all his miracles was his daily life.

The inquiries instituted by the Papal commissions in South America during the process of canonisation, prove that the Saint converted innumerable souls to God throughout all the districts in which he laboured. Though there were many zealous and holy missionaries in the New World, none made such spiritual conquests as our Saint, and this was established by the united testimony of the Spaniards and the natives.

Without doubt one reason of this unparalleled success was to be found in the gift of tongues with which God had endowed him. The various dialects of the Indian tribes

formed one of the most harassing difficulties of the missionaries, and the interpreters were one of their greatest trials. Under the most favourable circumstances an interpreted sermon must suffer in effect, but when the probability of a negligent, ignorant, or malicious change of the missionary's words is considered, the inconvenience becomes much more serious and may even defeat the whole object of the instruction. It must be most embarrassing to preach an important sermon, and yet to be ignorant of the words which the audience have heard. St. Lewis experienced this difficulty, as he related himself to some of his intimate friends in Spain.

At the outset of his missionary preaching he discovered that his interpreter either maliciously or through ignorance gave a wrong meaning to his words, and he therefore set himself to plead with God for the same gift of tongues for which St. Vincent Ferrer was so much celebrated, and by means of which he converted such multitudes to God. His prayer was heard, and one day while preaching through his interpreter, the natives begged him to address them himself as they perfectly understood his words. This gift, the peculiar mark of a divine apostolical mission, is communicated (as Benedict XIV. teaches \*) in two ways. For either the Apostle preaches in his own tongue and is understood by those who listen as if he used their languages, or else he is enabled by his gift to employ languages of which naturally he is ignorant. St. Thomas † considers that the latter is the more perfect form of the gift, because it would enable the preacher to understand the questions of his audience, as well as to address them.

St. Lewis appears to have possessed the gift in both ways. The Bull of his Canonisation testifies that when preaching in his native Spanish, he was understood by the Indians,

\* "Treatise on Heroic Virtue," vol. iii. ch. ix. Orat. trans.

† 2. 2. Qu. 176. art. 1.

who were totally ignorant of that language. Captain Francis Sanchez relates that he was astonished to hear the Saint preaching to the natives in Castilian, and on his questioning them, they replied that they perfectly understood the sermon. On the other hand, Jerome Ferdinand, who for a considerable time accompanied the Saint on his journeys, testified that on one occasion they visited an island, the inhabitants of which were some of them black and some white, and that the Saint immediately began to preach to them in a language utterly unintelligible to him, but evidently familiar to the natives. After the sermon many demanded baptism; and seeing the fruit of his labours abundant, the Saint remained there for a considerable time, instructing them; and before leaving wrote the Pater, Ave, Credo, Salve Regina, and other prayers in their own language, and left them in the hands of the chief inhabitants.

This miraculous gift both facilitated the intercourse of the Saint with the poor natives and naturally gained for him the most powerful influence over their minds. It was a constant supernatural sanction to his words, and when the burning zeal and charity with which he was transported in preaching is remembered, the number of conversions he effected is less astonishing. God spoke by his mouth. His words, coming forth from a heart inflamed with Divine Love, penetrated the souls of his hearers, enlightening them and attracting them to the truth. No wonder, therefore, that the natives converted by him were acknowledged on all hands to be the most sincere and the best instructed of all the pagan converts.

The trial most keenly felt by the Saint, amidst the many he had to endure, was the difficulty he experienced in going to confession. Missionaries were scarce, and the stations called by the Spaniards *Pueblos* or Houses of doctrine, were scattered over the vast provinces at distances of many



miles, and the custom was for the Fathers to meet half way between these stations for confession on certain appointed days. But St. Lewis had been accustomed to confess at least once and often twice in the same day, and he suffered more from this privation than from the constant fatigue, hunger, thirst, and other trials which affected only his body. His consolation, however, was found in the number of souls he was enabled to lead to God.

It has been already stated that St. Lewis landed in Carthagená, and the Convent of St. Joseph in that city was his dwelling-place when not employed elsewhere by his Superiors. The fame of his apostolic preaching soon filled the city, and on the days when a sermon from Father Lewis was announced, men abandoned their business, and repaired in crowds to the Church of the Friar Preachers. One sermon in particular was long afterwards remembered and spoken of in rapturous terms by all who were privileged to be listeners. It was on Good Friday, and St. Lewis poured forth words of pathetic love on that sublime and most touching of Christian mysteries—the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ. The hearts of all were deeply moved, sobs of contrition were heard in every part of the church, and the burning words of the Saint, who was so ardent a lover of the Cross of Jesus Christ, made men realise as they never had before, the meaning of those words,—God has died for our sins.

He continued in Carthagená the same life of mortification and prayer that he had led in Valencia, and his humility, charity, and love for souls soon convinced his religious brethren that God had given them a Saint. His Superiors first employed him in the neighbourhood of the city of Carthagená, and it seems to have been thus early that he was sent to preach in the Isthmus of Panama.\* Unhappily

\* *Vide* Touron.

no details are recorded of this distant mission, and we are merely told that in a short period of time he converted as many as six thousand natives. The nearest part of the Isthmus is about 200 miles from Carthagená, but we are not told whether the Saint travelled this distance by land or by sea. Aviñone speaks of his making immense journeys at this time, not only on foot, but barefoot, amidst perils and sufferings of every description ; but he does not mention the particular places in which he preached.

His first companion appears to have been a layman named Jerome Cardilla, a native of Valencia, who volunteered to serve the Saint whom he saw destitute of all assistance. Where he went with St. Lewis is not more particularly described than by speaking of long journeys in the Province of Carthagená. Jerome, however, soon found the hardships he was obliged to endure in the Saint's company intolerable. His office was to carry the little bag in which was the whole provision made by St. Lewis for his painful journeys through the forests and over the mountains of New Granada. The bag contained only a Bible and an Office book. Wherever there were settlers the Saint was received and entertained with great hospitality, but to the intense disgust of poor Jerome, who had not his love of the Cross and of poverty, nothing would persuade him to take the least provision for the way. Not even a single loaf of bread or bottle of water was Jerome allowed to add to the Bible and Breviary, and on this point the meek and gentle Saint was inexorable. The consequence was, that they had often to suffer intense hunger in their long and weary marches through the forests and over the plains, and the tropical sun under which they travelled caused them excessive thirst. This was delightful to St. Lewis, but far otherwise to Jerome, who often murmured against the imprudence and folly of his companion in no measured terms. The Saint treated him with his accustomed meek-

ness and gentleness, exhorting him to be of good heart, and to bear some little suffering gladly for the love of God and in union with the sufferings of Christ.

One day Jerome was complaining more bitterly than usual, and the Saint, finding that his words of exhortation only irritated him more, replied, "Well, my brother, if you cannot endure your hunger, come aside here into this wood." They entered the wood together, and soon discovered a tree laden with much fruit, ripe and fair to see, with a sparkling fountain of water welling out at its foot. The sight was ravishing to poor starving Jerome, and reposing in the delicious shade near the cool fountain he began to satisfy his hunger with the fruit which proved as agreeable to the taste as the sight. Jerome could see no other tree of this description in the wood, and all the circumstances of the case made him certain that the food was miraculous. After thus refreshing himself, Jerome, with a lively sense of what he had already suffered, begged the Saint to allow him to fill the bag with fruit, but the request was firmly refused. St. Lewis was determined to fulfil to the letter the command of our Lord to His Apostles, to take nothing for their journey "but a staff only, no scrip, no bread, nor money in their purse" (Mark vi. 8), confident that when asked, "When I sent you without purse and scrip and shoes, did you want anything?" (Luke xxii. 35), he would be able to answer with the Apostles, "Nothing, Lord." He was also resolved that any one who travelled with him should conform to the same rule of Apostolic Poverty, in order to bring down an especial blessing upon his work. Jerome, however, had no taste for such absolute dependence on God's providence, and finding the Saint immovable in his decision, he disobeyed his orders and secreted some fruit in the bag. They had not gone far before St. Lewis demanded to see the bag, discovered the hidden fruit and threw it away with his own hands. This so enraged Jerome that at the next

village he announced to the Saint that he would walk no more with him and that he must proceed alone. "I am sorry, my brother," replied St. Lewis, "that I have nothing to give you ; but I am still more grieved to foresee that your life and death will both be miserable." Aviñone says that this prophecy was strictly verified.

But although he had nothing then to give him for his service, St. Lewis was able after his death to requite him by a signal favour. Jerome, who had returned to Spain, had entered the service of a gentleman named John Boil, and quarrelling with another servant in the garden, he received such a blow on the head with a stone that his life was despaired of by the surgeons. One night, as he was tossing about in pain, he began to invoke St. Lewis with the utmost earnestness, and cried out, "Father, since I became your companion in the Indies, and did you what service I could, help me now in this danger." He then fell asleep, and dreamt that he saw the blessed Man by his side, and felt the pressure of his hand on his wounded head. Next morning when the surgeons untied the bandages they found the wound so far healed, that a painful method of treatment they had determined on trying was considered unnecessary, and before long Jerome completely recovered.

The forests of South America are thickly peopled by the animal creation, as readers of Waterton and other naturalists will remember, and though the jaguars, often called the American tiger, is not so ferocious as the Indian tiger, he is sufficiently dangerous to terrify an unarmed traveller. Humboldt describes this animal as strong enough to drag to the summit of a hill the body of a young bull he has slain. Then besides many smaller animals there is the caguar, called by Humboldt "the great maneless lion." But there are more insidious enemies than these monsters ; for from the branches of the immense forest trees hangs the boa-constrictor, which, seeing its unconscious prey passing

underneath suddenly stretches out its body and coiling round its victim proceeds to crush all its bones before gradually swallowing it whole. The rivers also have their dangers, for where the sandbanks appear in a shallow part, numerous alligators may be seen basking motionless in the sun.

This will show us that considerable courage would be necessary to journey through these trackless forests alone. When we picture to ourselves the vast plains, the steep mountain side, the forests with gigantic trees interlacing their arms and forming often impassable barriers, the broad rivers sparkling in the sun, the tropical vegetation, the wild animals and not less terrible reptiles,—how admirable is the courage of that solitary wanderer bearing the habit of St. Dominic, pale and emaciated with sickness, unarmed and without food, travelling night and day on his heavenly mission. No worldly motive, neither love of sport, nor of science, nor of gain, has attracted this man from his distant home in Spain, but the love of the Good Shepherd has filled his heart with the desire to seek the souls of those who knew not Christ. Amidst all dangers his only protection is the invisible power of the Master he serves. "Fear not, I am with thee," is the promise to which he trusts.

Jerome Fernandez, who was his companion on some of these journeys, relates how terrified he often felt at the sight of the wild animals they encountered, till the Saint taught him courage by his own confidence in God's protection. The first time a large jaguar appeared on their path, Jerome, struck with terror, exclaimed, "Where are you going, Father? we shall be devoured by this wild beast!" but the Saint calmly replied, "Fear not, my son, God is with us!" and went forward making the sign of the Cross. The beast slunk away and disappeared. It is right to add that this, although it proves the heroic confidence St. Lewis reposed in the protection of God, was not necessarily miraculous. Jaguars,

though formidable beasts, are not as savage as the Indian tiger, and will often retire before a boldly advancing man. But this does not diminish our admiration at the courage of St. Lewis, whose trust was in God alone, for probably he knew little about the habits of these animals, and would have advanced in as fearless a manner if he had encountered an African lion.

Fernandez was also a witness of the penance practised by the Saint on these journeys, during which we should have thought even his thirst for suffering would have been appeased by the hardships of the way. But fatigue and hunger, heat and parching thirst, were not enough. Love, which is insatiable, prompted him to add voluntary austerities. Noticing that the Saint liked to plunge into the woods, leaving him alone for some time, and that this happened more often on Fridays than on other days, Fernandez one day secretly followed and found him lacerating his shoulders with severe strokes of the discipline, praying at the same time with intense earnestness and many tears for the forgiveness of his own sins and the conversion of the natives.

While residing at Carthagená Lewis gave several striking proofs of the gift of prophecy with which he was endowed. The Prior being anxious to finish some work he had in hand, determined to devote to this purpose the proceeds of the Lenten Sermons. He therefore arranged that St. Lewis was to preach during Lent in a town, now destroyed, called *Nombre de Dios* (Name of God), and at the same time the Subprior was appointed to the same office at "*Rio de la Hacha*," while the Prior himself went to *Varagua*. St. Lewis considered that this arrangement savoured too much of worldly prudence, and his conviction that it was not according to the Divine Will grew so strong that he remonstrated with the Prior, saying decidedly, "God will not bless this idea, Father; the result will be that Father Jerome will die at his station, and both your own preaching and

mine will be interrupted by severe illness." This distinct prophecy, however, did not change the Prior's resolution,—probably, not knowing the gift of prophecy possessed by St. Lewis, he did not believe his words. If so, he soon had abundant reason to regret his incredulity, for before the end of his Lenten course he was compelled to return, from sickness, and found that the sermons of St. Lewis had been interrupted from a similar cause, while before Easter the news was brought of the Subprior's death at Rio de la Hacha.

On another occasion St. Lewis exhorted the wife of a Spaniard, named Peter Barros, to prepare at once for death, and although she appeared in perfect health at the time of this solemn warning, a sudden illness, terminating fatally, attacked her a few days afterwards.

It was not long before St. Lewis became a witness of the cruelties inflicted on the unfortunate natives by so many of the unprincipled Spanish officials, and, like other missionaries, found their inhuman conduct the most serious obstacle to the conversion of the heathen. Going on one occasion from Carthagena to celebrate Mass at a place called Baraona, he heard authentic accounts of the brutality with which the natives were there treated. Affected beyond measure at what he heard and witnessed, the Saint, after consulting God in prayer, predicted that the poor Indians would be delivered before very long from the hands of their chief persecutor, who would be overtaken by death. Ferdinand d'Alle, one of the governors of the district, was greatly alarmed when this prophecy reached his ears, and it is to be hoped that his fear rendered him a protector of the natives. He sent to inquire from St. Lewis whether the prediction referred to him, and the answer was that the punishment prophesied would fall not on the governor, but on his superintendent, who was a bitter and relentless persecutor. Two years were mercifully vouchsafed to the wretched man after this warning, but we are not told

whether he availed himself of the opportunity to repent and make reparation for his injustice. After that, death overtook him, according to the word of the Saint.

The success which, by God's blessing, attended the labours of the Saint, so enraged the evil one, who had considered these regions as peculiarly his own, that he excited various persecutions against the Servant of God, and, in order to destroy his influence, instigated a miserable wretch to calumniate him by a public accusation. A worthless Spaniard had seduced a poor Indian woman who had been converted by the Saint, and who for some time had lived as a good Christian. The Spaniard, fearing punishment from the authorities for his crime, persuaded the woman to declare that St. Lewis was the father of her children, and the wicked calumny spread throughout the neighbourhood, to the great affliction of all who knew the holy missionary. In the keen suffering he endured from this trial, his refuge was the foot of his crucifix, where he humiliated himself and poured forth earnest prayers for the conversion of his calumniators. The case was at once examined by the proper officials, and the real culprit being discovered, the magistrates were determined to punish him with the utmost severity; but St. Lewis exerted such influence that he was able to obtain a complete though undeserved pardon. His companion tried to persuade him to allow the man to be punished as his crimes deserved, but he answered, "Not so, my Brother, if all the injuries we receive were punished according to justice, how could we practise the virtue of the forgiveness of injuries, and how could we gain the crown of Christian patience. It is right to suffer something for God." He availed himself afterwards of every possible opportunity to show special friendship to this man; and the devil's malice was thus turned against himself, for what he had intended to destroy the reputation of the Saint only served to display



his virtues in more brilliant colours. Two more instances of his supernatural insight are related as happening at this time. The Prior and Subprior of the Convent of St. Joseph in Carthage were seriously ill, and St. Lewis was consulted as to the result; "They will both die," he confidently replied, "and on the same day;" and the event soon proved the truth of his words. The second instance occurred while he was attending a gentleman named Paragan de Ribera in his last illness. The poor man was raving in delirium, when they called the Saint, who asked for ink and wrote some holy names on paper which he bound on the sick man's forehead. He immediately recovered his reason, but a mysterious and terrible noise was heard, which St. Lewis explained to the horrified bystanders, assuring them that it foreboded no evil to the sick man whose salvation he declared to be secure. His family had been filled with terror lest this preternatural sound might be a signal of God's displeasure and of the damnation of the dying man, but the holy Father confidently asserted that, on the contrary, it was a sign of the discomfiture of the infernal enemy, and consequently an assurance of the salvation of the departing soul.

## CHAPTER III.

### MISSION IN TUBERA.

Lewis ordered to Tubera—Rule of Life—Miraculous Baptism—Penance—Wonderful Success—Diabolical Plot—Devil as Angel of Light—Rescue of James Frances—Rosary—Dead raised to Life—Attempt on his Life—Idols Destroyed—Influence over the Natives—Conversion on Deathbed—Grief at departure of St. Lewis—Miracle wrought by his Intercession.

"Although I be nothing, yet the signs of my apostleship have been wrought on you, in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."  
—2 COR. xii. 12.

"As a tree beside the running waters, Lewis, in the New World, brought forth fruit in his season."—*First Antiphon at Matins.*

**T**HE first mission of St. Lewis concerning which anything like a detailed account can be gathered, was in Tubera, where he dwelt for the space of three years. How long after his arrival in South America these labours commenced we are not informed, but as the whole of his American apostolate lasted only for the space of seven years, it is evident that the mission in Tubera was one of the most important. Before this time he had made various missionary excursions, but now he was directed by his Superiors to reside at Tubera, where if not the whole population, at least the great mass of the natives were still idolators.

The Saint was not the first missionary in Tubera. This is proved by the fact that he found a small church already built, though of the rudest and most primitive construction, and in the little hut by its side, which was to be his dwelling

for three years, he discovered to his joy an old and beloved friend ready to welcome him—extreme evangelical poverty. In this way neither the church nor the hut left anything to be desired.

Tubera is situated in the part of the province where the heat is most oppressive, being on the low lying country, comparatively near the sea-coast, about midway between the city of Carthagen and the river Magdalena. Mosquitos and other stinging insects abound, the climate is stifling, being too far from the coast to have the advantage of the sea breezes, and not sufficiently inland to be on the higher and, therefore, cooler plateau of the interior, so that altogether the small and inconvenient hut must have been anything but an agreeable residence. But this was an advantage in the eyes of the Saint, so completely had grace overcome nature.

On receiving the orders of his Superiors, he started at once for Tubera on foot, carrying his Bible and Office book. Probably he walked barefoot, as on so many of his journeys at this time. His life from the hour he reached Tubera was one unceasing course of prayer and penance, united to unwearied labour, for the souls of the inhabitants. His bed was not even a bare plank, but considering this too luxurious, he constructed a kind of wooden gridiron upon which he lay for the short period of the night not devoted to prayer. Upon this wooden grill was no mattress or covering, nothing but a stone for a pillow. As to his daily food he relied entirely on Divine Providence, and far from being solicitous for the morrow he cared not to provide even for the passing day. He devoted himself entirely to spiritual things, leaving the care of his body to Him who said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His Justice, and all things else shall be added unto you." On this principle he would not allow any food to be stored up in his hut, and even refused the usual allowance provided for

the support of the missionaries serving parishes or districts. When the Superintendent of the Indians, Francis Ribera, was at home, he provided the Saint with the necessities of life, but if that official happened to be absent, it frequently happened that St. Lewis spent the whole day labouring among the natives with nothing whatever to eat. At such times he experienced lively joy, for he then considered himself as really tasting the poverty of Jesus Christ. Certainly he had learnt in a very practical way the teaching of St. Vincent Ferrer, that he who loves poverty must welcome the effects of poverty—want, hunger, and thirst; and must be ready to be deprived of everything for the love of Christ. In his extreme desire to convert souls, he at this time exchanged his ordinary discipline for one made of iron chains, with which he scourged himself daily with the utmost severity, offering his blood in union with the Precious Blood of Christ for the benighted pagans to whom he was preaching.

A wonderful event which happened during the first few days of his residence in Tubera encouraged him in no ordinary degree to hope for the conversion of the inhabitants, while it afforded him fresh motives for thankfulness to God and abandonment to His Divine Providence. He was praying alone in his little church when an Indian entered carrying a child in his arms and uttering loud cries. St. Lewis, not understanding him, called an interpreter who explained that the child was dying and that the Indian was begging him to baptize it while still alive. The Saint asked in astonishment how he had learnt anything about baptism, as he was an uninstructed pagan, and the man replied, "When I was on yonder mountain a good Spirit told me that you had come into this country, and that if you poured water on my child's head it would be saved." St. Lewis baptized the child, giving it the name of Michael, as it was the Eve of St. Michael's day; and

shortly after its soul departed to heaven. This event was an immense consolation to the Saint, for he considered it as a special sign of God's blessing on his work in Tubera that the first he received into the true Fold should have been thus marvellously sent to him and then so quickly taken into the glory of heaven. St. Lewis often related this circumstance as an instance of the goodness of God and the impenetrable mystery of His Divine election, and exclaimed with St. Paul, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God. How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways. For of Him and by Him and in Him are all things: to Him be glory for ever" (Rom. xi. 33).

According to his custom, ever since he had begun his American mission, he made all his journey on foot, notwithstanding the immense distances, the difficulties of the roads and mountain paths, the tremendous heat, and lastly, the weak and suffering state of his own health. On one occasion he was called to a little hamlet, a great distance from Tubera, in order to administer the last Sacraments to a dying man. The Saint was ill at the time and suffering severely from the wound on his leg which tormented him during his whole sojourn in America; but although the heat was intolerable and the mountain road rocky and steep, no persuasions could induce him to mount a horse that was provided for the journey. Glad of an opportunity of penance, he accomplished the whole distance on foot.

No doubt when men saw the emaciated countenance of the Saint, when they found him leaning against a wall or a tree to prevent his falling, from the vertigo he constantly suffered in his head, from the pain of his leg, or from sheer exhaustion in the midst of constant labour, with scarcely any food or sleep, they must have blamed his excessive austerity, and counselled him to attend to the wants of his body in order to be able to persevere in his work. But

all such arguments were lost on St. Lewis. He listened only to the voice of God in his heart, and trusting entirely to the strength of Divine grace, he waged incessant war against himself. Far from considering that the severity of his penance and the sufferings it entailed was any impediment to his work for souls, he was entirely convinced that the success of his labours would be in proportion to the sufferings he endured, the sacrifices he made, and the blood he was enabled to shed in union with the Precious Blood of Christ. He evidently considered that the words of our Blessed Lord to His disciples, "This kind is not driven out save by prayer and fasting," were eminently true concerning the devils who held the poor natives in the bondage of idolatry. How far did the result justify this idea? Was his mission in Tubera a success?

This question is answered conclusively by the book of baptismal registers in the Saint's own handwriting, and from the entries it is shown that he converted all the inhabitants of Tubera. This is confirmed by the Bull of Canonisation, in which we read that at Tubera "by his prayers, fasts, and scourgings, he obtained from God the grace of conversion for all the infidels of the place." Father Feuillet gives 10,500 as the number, and Turón records that it was above 10,000. Nor must it be supposed that these immense numbers imply that the natives, excited by his vehement preaching, were baptized without instruction, and therefore without understanding the real nature of their act. It was, on the contrary, remarked by all who came across the converts of St. Lewis that they were thoroughly instructed in the Christian truths, and that they persevered with constancy in the true Faith. The prodigious labour entailed by these wholesale conversions would have been impossible, without especial and extraordinary assistance from God; but although this particular grace enabled St. Lewis to persevere, it did not prevent him from suffering. In spite

of all difficulties and fatigue he continued to catechise and instruct the natives with heroic patience, and after constantly repeating the same simple instructions, he was at last rewarded by finding that the light of truth had taken possession of their minds. This must have been effected in great measure by individual teaching ; and those whose duty it has been to instruct the ignorant even of civilised nations can appreciate the difficulty of the task, and the zealous charity of the holy missionary. When he preached, the fervour of his soul was manifested by the sighs and tears which accompanied his words. This simple earnestness gave a penetrating power to his words to move the hearts of hardened sinners. The fire of his soul clothed the simplest sentences with eloquence in the truest and highest sense. It gave him power to move hearts, and those among his audience, whether Spaniards or natives, who were most hardened by habits of vice, were softened, enlightened, and converted by the servant of God. The words that God had put into his mouth did not return to Him fruitless.

The natives were naturally astounded at the superhuman life of St. Lewis, who seemed rather an angel from heaven than a man of flesh and blood like themselves. Most of them were ready to follow the teachings of so wonderful a man, but in some minds an opposite effect was produced. They were enraged at the freedom with which the Saint denounced their wicked lives, and by the suggestion of the devil, who desired nothing more than to counteract the influence of St. Lewis, they determined to endeavour to betray him into sin, and thus to prove that his virtue was but a pretence, and that in reality he was as vicious as they were. With this malicious intention they induced a miserable woman to present herself at the door of the Saint's little cabin under the pretence of seeking instruction. St. Lewis soon discovered the diabolical stratagem, and finding

that words of solemn reproof were of no avail to convert or drive her away, he felt obliged to resort to more violent measures, and seizing the leathern belt of his habit he gave her several severe blows. Subdued by this salutary discipline, and feeling convinced that her abominable design was hopeless, the miserable woman exclaimed, "Forgive me, Father, I did not undertake this wickedness of my own accord," and she then explained how the natives had hired her to try his virtue. The malice of the devil was thus completely foiled, for the reputation of St. Lewis was greatly increased by the event.

The evil one, however, persevered in his attempts against the servant of God. Finding it useless to endeavour to lead him astray by direct temptations to sin, he transformed himself into an angel of light to deceive him. He appeared to the Saint in the form of a venerable old hermit of collected demeanour, pale and emaciated by lengthened exercises of penance, and began to converse with him about the natives, and the prospect there was of converting them to Christianity. After saying something to gain the confidence of the holy missionary, he began to represent the natives to be a fickle and inconstant race, whose sincerity could not be trusted, that if they seemed to be converted it was but pretence, and that immediately his back was turned they would relapse into their former idolatry. He advised him therefore to abandon his hopeless task, and to seek some other field where his labours would be more appreciated and would bear more lasting fruit. The Saint listened attentively to these arguments, praying to God for light, and thus was speedily able to recognise the enemy under the disguise he had assumed; whereupon Satan, finding himself discovered and his designs once more baffled, gave vent to hideous yells of disappointed malice, and disappeared.

Enraged at their repeated defeats, and seeing the marvellous success of his labours, the evil spirits entered the little



cabin inhabited by St. Lewis and cruelly scourged him, and sometimes, when he was praying or taking the discipline, they would surround and maltreat him so that he was heard exclaiming with a voice of authority, "Begone, traitors, begone from my presence !"

During his stay at Tubera, the Saint was one day admonished in prayer that there was a certain man on the seashore in a desolate condition, greatly in need of assistance. The sea-coast was several miles distant, but his charity prompted him to start at once on this mysterious errand of mercy. On reaching the sea-coast he immediately began his search, and before long discovered the body of a man apparently dead, and lately washed up by the waves. St. Lewis found on examination that life was not extinct, and recognised the half-drowned man as a friend of his own in Valencia named James Raphael Frances. When the poor man recovered and found himself in the arms of St. Lewis his joy was equal to his astonishment. The holy missionary embraced him tenderly, clothed him in dry garments he had brought, and fed him with his own hands. Frances then related how he had been shipwrecked on his voyage from Valencia to Carthagená, and was the only one saved out of the galleon in which he was sailing. When the vessel foundered he threw himself into the sea, trusting in the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary, to whose motherly care he had already commended the whole voyage. For two nights and a day he had been floating on the waves, expecting death either from exhaustion or from the sharks ; but during the whole time he ceased not to call upon the Queen of the Holy Rosary for protection, till at last he was cast by the waves on this unknown shore, but in a state of the most complete exhaustion. Unable to stand from fatigue and hunger he would soon have breathed his last but for the assistance afforded him by St. Lewis, who, to his amazement, he had suddenly seen standing over him.

Our Lady of the Rosary had not deserted him in the extremity of his danger, for it would have availed little to have delivered him from the perils of the deep and the jaws of the hungry sharks, if she had not sent her servant to complete the good work. Francis was naturally anxious to publish everywhere the fact of this miraculous deliverance, but the Saint would not allow him to mention it, unless he attributed the whole miracle to the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary, fearing lest his friend might endeavour to attract the attention of the people to himself. The same caution he gave, after his return to Valencia, to a secular Priest, the brother of James Frances. "Do not thank me; the whole deliverance was due to the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary, and we must increase in our love and devotion to her."

His own love of the Rosary was like that of St. Dominic himself. He constantly recited the mysteries himself with the utmost devotion, taught the use of the Rosary to his converts, and considered the success of his preaching depended on the intercession of Our Lady of the Rosary. Many miraculous favours were granted to those who devoutly used rosaries that had been blessed by the servant of God. After his return to Valencia the Saint gave a Rosary to a friend of his and bid him preserve it with care and reverence, "because in the Indies this chaplet cured the sick, converted sinners, and I think also," he added, "raised the dead to life." On another occasion he spoke more decidedly to a spiritual friend who was in his confidence, saying distinctly, "God, in His mercy, vouchsafed that this Rosary should raise the dead to life." Thus his devotion to the Rosary almost unconsciously betrayed him into revealing a miracle he had ever sought to conceal—the raising of a girl to life during his South American Mission. The report of this great miracle had spread among the natives and reached Valencia, but the

Saint would not acknowledge its truth, though he was never able to deny the fact, which proves, as Father Antist justly remarks, that it must have been perfectly certain, for had the slightest doubt existed in his mind, never for a moment would he have allowed such a report to be circulated and believed. Whenever any allusion was made to this miracle the Saint endeavoured at once to change the conversation—with such evident embarrassment and such a look of pain on his countenance, that no one had the courage to continue the subject. Once, however, an intimate friend put so direct a question that Lewis felt obliged to answer, “What makes you ask about that? God does in these matters what a blacksmith would if he desired to make an iron tool; he has many suitable pieces of iron at hand, and he selects the one he pleases, although all are fit for his purpose.”

This evasive answer renders it certain that the miracle did actually take place, for the Saint was thus giving glory to God and acknowledging that he was but a mere instrument in the hands of the Divine Majesty, who alone is wonderful in all His works. Where this miraculous event happened or at what period of his mission in America is not recorded.

During his residence in Tubera the Saint's life was attempted in consequence of the Apostolic freedom with which he denounced a public scandal, and his deliverance from the danger being considered wonderful, the event increased more than ever the veneration in which he was already held. A certain Cacique, or Indian chieftain, one of the most important men in Tubera, although a married man, kept as his concubine the wife of another native. This crime was notorious, and the high position of the Cacique increased the gravity of the scandal, for although not a Christian, such a crime was an open violation not only of the natural law, but of the laws in force among the

natives themselves, which strictly forbade adultery. As the Cacique was frequently present at the instructions given by the Saint, he took several opportunities of admonishing him of his sin, and pointing out his guilt and the scandal it occasioned, but not being able to convert the chieftain, he denounced him publicly, and with great vehemence, in a sermon, threatening him with the anger of God unless he repented. The Cacique himself was present, and the humiliation of this public reproof filled him with ungovernable fury. He sprang up, rushed towards the Saint who was preaching on the steps of the church door, and aimed a terrific blow at his head with a heavy Indian club or battle-axe made of wood as hard as iron. All were struck dumb with horror, for the death of the holy preacher seemed inevitable. But to the astonishment of every one, especially of the Cacique himself, the holy man stood unmoved, without even changing his countenance, and the head of the weapon was found to be buried by the force of the blow, in the ground at his feet. After this narrow escape, which all the eye-witnesses considered to be an extraordinary Providence, the Saint, as if nothing unusual had happened, calmly made his preparation for Mass, and began to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice.

The desire he cherished in his inmost heart to gain, if possible, the crown of martyrdom—made him fearless in his war against idolatry. Not content with requiring all the new Christians to break in pieces the idols they had once venerated, he determined to destroy those belonging to the natives who had not yet embraced the true Faith. These idols were concealed in secret places, and St. Lewis would persuade little native children to lead him in the dark to these hidden sanctuaries of the devil, and then at the risk of his life he would destroy the idols with his own hands. One night he set fire to two of these temples of false worship; they were entirely consumed by the flames, and never rebuilt.

Before the end of his three years' mission, however, at Tubera, where, as has already been said, he left no pagans, the natives had not only ceased to oppose him, but regarded him with the highest possible respect and veneration, on account of the miraculous gifts he displayed and the proofs he gave of intense charity and heroic virtue. Such was his disinterestedness and love of poverty that he would not receive even the alms offered him for saying Mass, but ordered the offerings to be distributed among the poor, though he celebrated the Holy Sacrifice for the intentions of the donors. On one occasion some natives going to the little hut in which the Saint lived, discovered him, to their amazement, raised high above the ground in ecstasy. They called others as witnesses of this extraordinary sight, and all were filled with the utmost reverence for a man whom God thus visibly favoured.

It is, therefore, no matter of surprise to learn that the influence of the Saint was most powerful over their minds even in times of extraordinary excitement and passion. As an instance of this we are told that on occasion of one violent riot, the Superintendent of the natives owed his life entirely to the timely interposition of St. Lewis. To judge from what so often happened, this disturbance was probably owing to the tyranny, at last unendurable, of this official, but however that might be, two hundred natives attacked and would undoubtedly have killed him, unless he had taken refuge in the church. Here he was fortunate enough to find St. Lewis, who, using the influence his holiness had given him, was able to quiet the natives by his gentle words ; and thus saved the Superintendent from a fate he had probably only too thoroughly deserved. It is to be hoped that he profited from the lesson.

One of the principal Caciques of Tubera was dying, and St. Lewis received him into the Church on his deathbed. This conversion cost him dear, for so enraged were the

devils to see the conversion and salvation of one they had considered their own, that they beat him with a ferocity that left him almost at the point of death. To some who expressed astonishment at this he replied, "Why are you surprised? know you not what St. Paul says,—‘our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers; against the rulers of the world of this darkness; against the spirits of wickedness in the high places.’" The newly-converted Christian being also tormented by the devil, complained of it to St. Lewis, who made a cross with reeds and placed it between the dying man and the door; the demon fearing this sacred sign, ceased his temptations.

We can imagine the grief that the converted inhabitants of Tubera must have felt, when they heard that their Apostle and Father in Christ had been ordered to depart to another mission. They exerted themselves in every possible way to prevent this calamity, and finding it at last inevitable, they flocked around him in tears to seek his parting benediction. God so blessed the work of His servant that the people of Tubera persevered as sincere and fervent Christians, while out of veneration for their Apostle they changed the hut which he had inhabited into a chapel, which was visited with great devotion both by the natives and the Spaniards.\* After his death the devotion of the people of Tubera increased towards him as their special patron with God, and many were the favours showered upon them through his intercession.

On one occasion an Indian named Martin was seized with a sudden illness which, depriving him of consciousness before he was able to confess, soon reduced him to the last extremity. The priest was greatly afflicted, and turned in his distress to St. Lewis as the Father of the Indians of

\* Bull of Canonisation.

Tubera ; after a fervent prayer he tore off a fragment of paper, marked by the Saint's writing, from the baptismal register, and this relic he hung round the sick man's neck. The result showed that his confidence in the Saint's powerful intercession was not misplaced. The sick man recovered his senses that day, and received the Sacraments, but ultimately completely recovered. The same priest was afterwards able to relieve the acute sufferings of another Indian by the application of a similar relic.

## CHAPTER IV.

### MISSIONS IN CIPACOA, PALUATO, AND ST. MARTHA.

Districts of Cipacoa and Paluato—Poverty—A second Elias—Storm averted  
—Fording a River—Calumny—Ungrateful Soil—Mission in St. Martha  
—Inhabitants of Paluato apply for Baptism.

“Neither he that planteth is anything, nor he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.”—1 COR. iii. 7.

“Elias was a man passible like unto us . . . and he prayed—and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”—ST. JAMES v. 17, 18.

**T**HE zeal of the saintly missionary was rather inflamed than satiated by his marvellous success in Tubera, and heedless of the tears and entreaties of the newly-converted Christians, he earnestly desired to visit other regions still in the darkness of paganism. Instead of indulging any desire he might have felt for rest after his labours, or for time to recruit his strength in the Convent of St. Joseph at Carthage, he longed to bear the glad tidings of salvation far and wide at any personal sacrifice. His Superiors seconded his zealous desires, and considering that the natives round Tubera, being now all Christians, could be committed to the care of others, they sent orders to the indefatigable Saint to evangelise the regions called Cipacoa or Capicoa, and Paluato. The editors of Avignon in the Bollandists say that they have been unable to discover where these places or regions are situated. None of the lives give any hint of their



situation, or whether they were towns or districts. From the names it seems likely that they were Indian tribes inhabiting, perhaps, large districts which afterwards received Spanish names, but wherever they were situated, they seem from the accounts to have been thickly populated. Francis Sanciz was the Spanish governor of these regions, and he was anxious to render every assistance to the Saint to facilitate the work of conversion; but not many details of this mission are recorded. Sanciz appointed some young Indians, maidens and boys, to accompany the Saint as servants, but he absolutely refused this assistance, saying that he was a poor religious, and therefore must not be provided with a household as if he were a man of the world. The most he would allow was, that the governor should send two native youths from time to time, in order to see that he had at least the necessaries of life, and they being assiduous in their visits to his little cabin were witnesses of the extraordinary austerity and penance of his daily life. They were amazed at the rigour of the Saint's fasts, but still greater was their astonishment when watching him secretly, they saw him scourging himself so severely with a discipline as to shed much blood which he was offering for the conversion of souls. They reported to the governor what they had seen, and he, fearing that the Saint's strength would be completely exhausted, begged him to mitigate these austerities, and to take more care of his body, advice which St. Lewis listened to humbly, and totally disregarded.

It has already been remarked that he refused to accept offerings for Masses, and in the same disinterested spirit he constantly declined all presents from the natives, such as eggs or fowls, nor would he accept offerings on the occasion of baptisms, or marriages, or funerals, wherever he might be. His abstinence from food was rigorous in the extreme, so that it seemed wonderful how he managed

to exist, while he drank water just tinged with wine on account of the constant weakness of his stomach. The Governor, Francis Sanciz, took the care of the Saint upon himself, and besides providing for his wants from his own table, he gave orders to his servants to supply him with everything needful during his absence from the country. On account of this entire abandonment of himself into the hands of Divine Providence, the people commonly called the Saint, the Religious of God.

Miracles, which according to St. Augustine are the seed of the Faith, were not wanting to corroborate the truth of the holy missionary's preaching, though the sanctity of his life was the strongest proof that the truth of God was in his mouth. He had before shown the power he possessed over the brute creation, and now he displayed equal authority over the fickle elements. The country had been suffering from a severe drought, and the principal Cacique of Cipacoa, accompanied with a multitude of natives, chiefly heathens, petitioned St. Lewis to obtain from God a supply of rain for the parched earth. It was the 24th of November, the vigil of St. Catherine, and the Saint took the opportunity of instructing them in the history of the holy Virgin and Martyr of Alexandria, and ended by saying, "Trust in God, my children, invoke St. Catherine the Martyr, she will easily obtain this favour for you from heaven. Prepare the road from hence to that mountain near the sea, and there erect an altar with a canopy made from the branches of trees ; to-morrow we will all go there in procession, and I will celebrate Mass. Be assured that God will hear our prayers." These encouraging words of the Saint circulated rapidly among the Indians, so that above a thousand assembled the next morning, in great measure no doubt moved by curiosity, but inspired also with a feeling of intense confidence that through the powerful prayers of Lewis, the heaven would give rain, and the

earth would yield her fruit. Nor were they disappointed in their trust in the power of this second Elias. The procession was formed, the Saint celebrated the Holy Sacrifice in the presence of a large multitude, and then preached with his accustomed fervour, proving to them, on the one side, the utter impotence of their false gods and of "the prophets of Baal" to succour them in this public calamity; while, on the other, he assured them of the power and mercy of the God of Heaven, the Creator of all things, for Whom St. Catherine had given her life as a martyr. Before the end of the sermon there was "a sound of abundance of rain, the heavens grew dark with clouds and wind," and before they were able to reach the shelter of their homes the welcome rain began to fall in torrents, continuing for the space of three days. The country had begun to suffer greatly from the continued drought, but this timely supply of rain gave an abundant harvest. We can imagine the influence which this public miracle gained for St. Lewis over the minds of the natives.

This was not the only occasion on which he showed the power of prayer over the natural course of the elements. Travelling once with the Captain Francis Sanciz, and a religious brother named James Xavier, they penetrated so far into the interior as to approach very near to the borders of Peru. One day, when the party had halted for rest and food, and St. Lewis had withdrawn himself from his companions in order to pray, they were alarmed by the rapid approach of a tropical storm. They at once disturbed the Saint in order to seek some place of shelter, but he calmed their fears by simply saying, "I beseech our Lady of the Rosary to turn the rain away from us, for we have no means of protection." The storm passed, the country all around was inundated, but not a drop fell on the Saint or his companions, the mantle of Our Lady's protection being spread over her servants.

On another occasion, when Sanciz was travelling in the Saint's company, they arrived at the banks of a river, and perceiving that the passage would be difficult and dangerous on account of the unusual height of the water, the Governor begged St. Lewis not to venture into the water till the safety of the ford had been properly ascertained. He then attempted the passage himself on horseback, with a negro attendant leading the horse on either side, but they soon lost their footing and the horse gained the opposite bank with much difficulty after swimming for a considerable time in the current. Sanciz shouted across the river to the Saint to wait till some boat or raft could be procured, but trusting in the Divine protection, he made the sign of the Cross over the water and passed over at once without danger or delay.

All our Saint's biographers agree in stating that the success of his preaching among the inhabitants of the districts of Cipacoa was as complete and marvellous as that with which his zeal had been rewarded in other districts. although no definite number of converts is mentioned. The fame of the holy missionary drew the natives from the forests and mountains, so that not only on Sundays and Festivals, but on the ordinary week days, large numbers assembled to hear Mass, and to listen to the sermons and instructions. Father Feuillet adds, that aided by the evident and astounding miracles by which his preaching was sanctioned, St. Lewis converted the majority of the numerous inhabitants of Cipacoa, and continued to instruct them until they had a solid and lasting knowledge of the mysteries of the faith which they had professed at Baptism.

The enemy of mankind endeavoured to destroy the influence of the Saint with the natives of Cipacoa by employing one of his agents to invent and spread abroad a base calumny. Some miscreant, envious perhaps of the high reputation enjoyed by Lewis for sanctity, spread a

report that this missionary who pretended to be so holy was a mere hypocrite, and that his austerity of life was only feigned as a veil to cover his depravity. The calumniator did not confine himself to general charges, but went so far as to assert positively that concealed in the house of the Governor Francis Sanciz were two children, the father of whom was St. Lewis. The Saint bore this calumny with heroic patience. Conscious of innocence he left his reputation in the hands of God. But Captain Sanciz did not take so supernatural a view of the case, and was filled with intense indignation. Having discovered the originator of the infamous report, he ordered him into his presence, and striking him with a sword in the face he exclaimed, "Wretched man, how dare you invent lies so abominable against so holy a missionary." This grieved St. Lewis, who begged that the man might be forgiven, "for though," he said, "I am innocent of the crime of which he accused me, I am a sinner and deserve any evil to be spoken against me."

Among certain tribes in the neighbourhood of the district of Paluato he did not meet his usual success, for, in spite of his immense exertions, his prayers, tears, and penances, they turned a deaf ear to the gospel tidings, and hardened their hearts against the influence of grace. They feared the wrath and the terrible vengeance with which, according to their priests, the demons they worshipped, under the form of idols, would visit those who were unfaithful in their service, and they also dreaded the strict discipline of the Christian Law, and the restraint they would be required to exercise over their passions. The Saint was at last compelled to abandon them in order to cultivate more grateful soil, and with tears of compassion for their blindness, and prayers for their conversion, he humbly adored the Providence of God Who alone can give the increase even where the labour is the hardest and most self-denying, and Whose ways are above our understanding. God, however, had

not abandoned these poor infidels, although His time had not yet come. They were reserved, not for wrath, but to display in a marvellous manner the compassion and long-suffering of God, and the power of the Saint's intercession.

The province of St. Martha was next visited by the Saint. This district is mountainous in the extreme. The Sierra Nevada of St. Martha rises with great abruptness from the level plain, about thirty miles from the sea-coast, to the height of 16,000 feet. The differences of climate are therefore very considerable within a short distance, as the traveller rises from the intense heat of the plains, to the perpetual snow of the mountains. The natives of this country received our holy apostle as an angel sent to them from heaven, and eagerly accepted the doctrine of salvation which he preached to them. No details of this most interesting mission are preserved, and we have to content ourselves with the assurance that an abundant harvest was reaped, as St. Lewis instructed and baptized as many as 15,000 persons.

Whilst converting the inhabitants of St. Martha, he was abundantly consoled for the failure of his former labours among the neighbouring Indians of Paluato whom he had been obliged to abandon. He was astonished one day to see a large body of natives, composed of 1500 people, approaching and begging an interview with him. They appeared to have journeyed from a distance, and proved to belong to the very tribe who had before rejected his preaching, and of whom two only had been baptized, but they all with one voice now demanded instruction, and the Holy Sacrament of regeneration. St. Lewis received them as we can easily imagine with the most thankful joy, which was heightened by their account of the reason which had induced them to seek him. They related that the two converted natives were present on a certain festival of their idolatrous worship, and the demon, when invoked, replied

with a voice of thunder, "Why invoke you me, when there are two Christians among you. Cast them out." Besides thus using an audible voice, the devil appeared in some visible shape to terrify them, but near this horrible form was suddenly seen an unknown man, clothed like a Christian, who said that he was sent by St. Lewis to prove to them the deceit, malice, and impotence of the devils they honoured as gods. This wonderful stranger then confronted the diabolical appearance; a dispute begun, the devil was put to evident confusion, and then both disappeared. The result was that the Indians at once journeyed in search of St. Lewis, and after due instruction, received the Holy Sacrament of Baptism at his hands.

## CHAPTER V.

### MISSION AMONG THE CARIBBEE INDIANS.

The Caribs—Their Bravery—Where did St. Lewis Preach—Guiana—The Bone Worshippers—Poison—Deliverance—Martyrdom—Lessons from the Caribs—Fear of the false Gods—Literal words of Christ's Promise.

"Go ye into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature. . . . And these signs shall follow them that believe, they shall cast out devils . . . if they shall drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them."—ST. MARK xvi. 15, 17, 18.

"We are cast down but we perish not: always bearing about the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies; Grant, O Lord, that I may die for Thee as Thou didst deign to die for me."—*Eighth Response at Matins.*

**M**OST of the natives of South America, inhabiting a tropical climate, were found by the Spaniards to be timid, gentle, indolent people, easily conquered and subjugated by any more civilised or more robust nation. Their physical constitution was weak, rendering them unfit for arduous labour, and their moral character was soft and pliant. This natural mildness and gentleness of the poor uncultivated natives predisposed them, for the most part, to receive without difficulty or opposition the saving truths of the Christian Faith, wherever the civilising and beneficent influence of the missionaries was not neutralised by the cruelty and avarice of so many of the Spanish colonists. The same characteristics rendered the unfortunate Indians an easy prey to the violence and



unjust extortions of the colonial governors, who disgraced by their inhumanity the religion they professed as well as the noble country from which they came.

But this feebleness of mind and body, though general, was not universal. The people of Chili were able to defend themselves valiantly against the Spaniards, and the tribes of Caribbee Indians, wild and savage in the extreme, manifested the utmost courage; and full of warlike spirit offered a determined resistance to the encroachments of the invaders. Bernaldes, a friend of Columbus, relates a striking anecdote illustrating the bravery of these savages. The Caribbee, afterwards called the Leeward Islands, were discovered by Columbus in his second voyage; among these islands the fleet suddenly met a canoe containing four Caribbee men, two women and a boy. At first the strange sight of the Spanish vessels struck them dumb and motionless with astonishment, but when they found themselves surrounded by their new and to them almost preternatural enemies, far from yielding they seized their arms with undaunted resolution, and began the attack. "I use," says the historian, "the expression with undaunted resolution, for they were few, and beheld a vast number ready to assault them. They wounded several of the Spaniards, although they had targets as well as other defensive armour; and even after their canoe was upset, it was with no little difficulty and danger that part of them were taken, as they continued to defend themselves, and to use their bows with great dexterity while swimming in the sea." \*

These fierce tribes had the terrible reputation, not altogether unfounded, of being cannibals, though stories of this nature related by the early Spanish colonists must be accepted with caution. Not only were exaggerated reports of the ferocity of newly-discovered tribes certain to arise

\* See note 95 to Dr. Robertson's "History of America."

from imaginary causes, but there existed moreover a strong incentive to the invention of this particular circumstance. The Home Government in forbidding slavery had excepted the case of cannibals, and those therefore who wished to enslave them, were willing enough to believe them guilty of eating human flesh. Cannibalism, at least as a circumstance of war, appears, however, to have existed to some extent among the Caribs. This terrible custom, exaggerated as it was by incredible stories of their appetite for human flesh being so great that they devoured each other in time of peace, joined with their undoubted bravery and skill in the use of arms, made these tribes objects of terror to the less vigorous natives. They were said to be so skilful as to secret poison under their thumb nail, and with that snake-like weapon to deal a fatal blow when apparently unarmed and defenceless.

If any missionary had as yet attempted the conversion of these savages to Christianity, his labours had not been crowned with success. St. Lewis, while preaching at St. Martha, appears to have heard of their savage state, and immediately felt inspired with an ardent desire to become their apostle. Their very ferocity attracted him. Perhaps they were to be the means of bestowing upon him the martyr's crown, even if he failed in his endeavour to bestow on them the light of the Christian Faith.

He obtained permission to preach to the Caribs immediately after his labours among the mountains of St. Martha. But now the question arises as to where these Carib tribes lived, and on this point there is the greatest obscurity among the biographers.

The early lives are contented to say simply that he evangelised the Caribs, without any mention of the situation of these tribes. "After converting the inhabitants of St. Martha," writes Aviñone, "he proceeded to preach to two tribes of Caribs," as if they were neighbours of the natives

of St. Martha. Some later writers represent that St. Lewis went into Guiana, a province most remote from St. Martha. "Counting the sacrifice of his life as nothing," says Turon, "St. Lewis penetrated alone into Guiana, the country of the Caribs. With incredible difficulty he traversed the forests and mountains." Turon quotes, as the general authority for the facts he records, the history of Lopez, but for this particular fact he alleges no further authority, and does not consider it a doubtful point.

Yet it would seem far more probable that the Caribs to whom St. Lewis preached were inhabitants of one of the islands not far from the coast of New Granada. Many considerations combine to make this almost certain, though the desire of a biographer would naturally be to extend the labours of his hero as far as possible in accordance with truth. Lewis, doubtless, had zeal enough to venture alone into Guiana or anywhere else, but as a matter of fact it does not appear that he did. In the first place, Guiana was not the land of the Caribs. They were natives of the West India Islands, afterwards called the Leeward Islands, though some certainly settled afterwards in Guiana, when driven out of their island homes by the Spaniards to whom they refused to submit. Whether they had already settled there so early as the sixteenth century might be doubted. Moreover, no trace of so long and difficult a journey appears in any life of the Saint. By land it would have been impossible at that time, and there is no mention of so lengthy a sea-voyage; whereas it would not have been difficult to sail from St. Martha to one of the Leeward Islands. After his mission had ended in the way presently to be related, St. Lewis is represented as being carried to the house of a Spanish governor, which would probably be in the district of St. Martha—from which he had come, but no journey of the magnitude of that from Guiana is hinted at, and the words used seemed to preclude the idea. Lastly, the

Bull of Canonisation, though it does not fix the spot, speaks of it as "not far from St. Martha."

On the whole, therefore, it would appear probable that St. Lewis never was in Guiana, and that the Caribs to whom he preached were islanders. But what island did they inhabit? This will probably never be known. In fact, at that time these islands had not geographical names, being still unsubdued, so that we must be content with the very indefinite knowledge that he preached in some island, probably one of the Leeward Islands called also the Little Antilles.

But though the scene of his labours is thus doubtful, it remains certain that he did preach to the savage Caribs. Although so rude and uncivilised, these poor Indians appear to have had certain elementary ideas of organised government. They lived together for mutual protection in villages ruled over by a Cacique or chief elected by the inhabitants. He was the father of the village, and administered that kind of rough and ready justice common to uncivilised tribes. The sound of a kind of drum assembled the fighting men in case of danger. They possessed also an idolatrous worship to which they were firmly attached, and as their superstition was great while their intellectual power was very slight, there appeared small grounds to hope for their conversion to Christianity. The task, in fact difficult in the extreme, needed the courage of a Saint. What actual success even the preaching of St. Lewis had, appears doubtful, though at first it was certainly very slight. However it is said, that afterwards he succeeded in converting a considerable number, though of this much proof does not appear. Amongst his converts were some negroes who had either deserted or had been carried away by the Caribs from some Spanish settlement.

But though the greatest obscurity hangs over this mission to the Caribs, one incident of the greatest import-

ance connected with it stands out in the clearest colours. It is, indeed, one of the facts of the Saint's life most widely known, and happily it rests on no mere legendary authority but on the undoubted testimony of Lewis himself. It was one of the few episodes of his western mission that he was fond of recalling for the glory of God.

He found in one place that the superstitious veneration paid to the bones of a defunct idolatrous priest formed an insuperable obstacle to the conversion of the natives. These bones were preserved with the utmost care in a chest, and sacrifice was offered to the dead priest. The people were firmly persuaded that if any one sacrilegiously removed these old bones from the place in which they were worshipped, the sky would immediately collapse, unable to endure the desecration; all would be involved in a common destruction. St. Lewis strove in vain by every argument in his power to prove to them the folly of this idea, but in vain. Finding words useless, he had recourse to deeds. He managed to remove the bones secretly by night, in the hope that the Indians, finding that the threatened catastrophe did not follow, might open their eyes to the deceit of the devil. The natives, however, would not thus reason. They discovered that the bones had been taken, they saw that the canopy of heaven still remained stretched over their heads, but instead of acknowledging their error and helping the Saint to burn the useless bones, they became enraged against him and would have killed him, had he not been defended from their violence by some of the recent converts who carried the holy man several leagues from the place.

The bone worshippers seeing that they could not accomplish their object openly, on account of the vigilance of the Christian natives, sent one of their priests to administer virulent poison to him. This traitor pretended to be friendly to the Saint, and invited him to eat with him, an

invitation Lewis accepted, hoping to convert his host. A concoction of poisonous herbs was placed before him, and the Saint drank enough to ensure his death. He was seized with the most violent internal pains, his stomach and bowels were consumed with intense heat, convulsions followed, and in the course of nature he must have died. He thought himself that death was certain, as he lay in agony attended by two poor faithful negroes he had converted, and who did the little they were able to alleviate the sufferings of their beloved Father. His pains, though extreme, were a subject of joy ; one thing only, as he afterwards used to relate, caused him affliction, and that was the impossibility of going to confession and receiving the last rites of holy Church.\* But he rejoiced exceedingly that at last he was dying for the faith, and he lay on the ground praying with great fervour, offering his life to Jesus Christ, while he held before his eyes the little wooden cross attached to his rosary.

While this valiant champion of the faith was thus helpless and dying, a procession of natives came to seek the sacred bones which had been removed ; and to the grief of St. Lewis, they not only discovered but carried them once more with the utmost solemnity to the place where they had been so long the object of their superstitious reverence.

For five days the Saint remained at the point of death. God then raised up His servant, giving him thus the merit, if not the crown, of actual martyrdom. On the fifth day he vomited what appeared to be a snake, and then rose up, restored suddenly to health. According to our Lord's promise, he had drank poison, and though he had suffered agonies, to prove the reality of the deadly

\* "I remember him telling me that in this danger nothing was so painful to him as the absence of a priest, from whom he might receive the Sacraments of Penance and the Holy Eucharist."—Antist, cap. iv. n. 66.

draught, it could not take away that life which, being so absolutely consecrated to God, was therefore under the special protection of the Divine Majesty.

When the Indians found that the virulent poison had no power over his life, they were astonished, indeed, and enraged, but not converted. They were still determined he should die. Collecting therefore to the number of three hundred, armed with clubs and bows, they came to attack the Saint, who remained in prayer, quietly awaiting their approach. When they had surrounded him with hideous gestures and songs he fearlessly turned to them, exclaiming, "Are you not yet convinced that you have been deceived by mere idle fears, for I appeal to your own senses; did the sky fall and destroy us all, as you had been taught to expect, when I carried away those bones?" One of his faithful negro servants had an old arquebuse, and would have fired upon the Indians had not the Saint forbidden him to injure any of the poor savages.

At this critical moment, when he appeared completely at the mercy of barbarians rendered half mad with superstitious rage, one of the principal caciques, whom he had before converted and baptized, came boldly forward and defended the Saint. He tried to convince the people of their folly in continuing to honour false gods whose threats of vengeance St. Lewis had so clearly proved to be vain and impotent, while on the other hand they refused to recognise the supreme power of that one true God the Master of life and death, who had delivered His servant from the effects of the deadly poison—the strength of which they so well knew. These representations from one in authority among them who once had believed the fables he now denounced, brought light to the deluded Indians; and, with the fickleness of savage people, they now fell down in reverence before him for whose blood they were thirsting a few moments before. St. Lewis began to instruct them

with his accustomed zeal and fervour, and had the consolation of bringing a great number of them to the faith and the holy Sacrament of Baptism.

The truth of this account and of the wonderful deliverance of St. Lewis from the poison rests, as has already been said, on the very highest authority—his own; and it only makes us regret more keenly that many other of the interesting and instructive events of his missions are unknown. 'This he related frequently to different intimate friends after his return to Europe, and among others to Dr. Natalis who has been before mentioned as the Rector of a place in the neighbourhood of Valencia. In speaking of it he used always to lament that he was not worthy of the glorious crown of martyrdom, and often exclaimed, "O happy death, through which I might have hoped for a martyr's palm! how happy was the lot of that Carmelite Father who, poisoned by the same idolatrous priest, gained that glorious privilege within a few hours!"

He also used to express his regret that, owing to the sufferings he was enduring, he was not able to prevent the Indians regaining the bones of the defunct priest and restoring them again to the place which had for so long been the scene of their superstitious worship. He was lying deprived of the use of his senses at the time, but if he had known what was being done and had been able to stand, he would have defended them with his life, so that they must have killed him before regaining possession of these hateful objects of their idolatrous worship.

But although St. Lewis lamented that God had been pleased to preserve him from a death which would have enabled him to enter heaven as a martyr, and actually to give his life in return for the love of God in dying for him, still he has all the merit of martyrdom, and is without doubt adorned in heaven with the glorious aureola of the martyr. In the judgment of theologians a man is truly a martyr who



voluntarily suffers for the faith in a manner that would cause his death according to the ordinary laws of nature unless God miraculously interfered. St. John the Evangelist has all the merit and glory of a martyr, because when he was plunged into the caldron of boiling oil, he as truly offered his life to God in testimony for the faith, as if the fire had been allowed actually to deprive him of life. St. Augustine distinctly teaches that the crown of martyrdom is bestowed upon those who are miraculously preserved by God from death amidst torments that would otherwise have taken away their lives, "for St. John the Apostle," says the holy Father, "although he had no actual suffering, was quite prepared in mind to suffer; he did not suffer, but he might have suffered. God knew his readiness to endure. So also the three children were cast into the furnace not to live, but to be burnt. Shall we deny them to be martyrs because the flame was unable to burn them. By the fire, indeed, they did not suffer, by their will they were crowned." \* By a like reasoning St. Lewis must share the glory of the martyrs.

Father Antist relates that the joy of the poor deluded Indians was so great when they found themselves once more in possession of their beloved bones, that they made offerings to the Saint of fowls and peacocks as if he had willingly restored to them the objects of their superstitious worship. These gifts he indignantly refused, which so enraged the natives that they again sought his life. He was rescued by the converted chieftain. After this fresh danger the two faithful blacks who had tended him during his agony from the poison, assisted by some of the friendly Indians, carried him on their shoulders for fifteen miles, and then taking ship, sailed to the place where Peter de Salazar, a Spanish governor, dwelt. He gladly afforded

\* St. Aug. Serm. 296, in Natali Apost. Petri et Pauli, cap. 4.

the Saint hospitality, and he remained there many months suffering from fever.

These, and many other sufferings, had been foretold to the Saint by a poor man who, though simple and ignorant, was much given to prayer and remarkable for holiness of life. Before the Saint had left Valencia for the Indies, on one St. John the Baptist's feast, this servant of God accosted him in the convent cloister, and said in words like those addressed by Agabus to St. Paul, "The Spirit has said to me that Father Lewis will suffer great afflictions and will be in the utmost danger, but out of all these things God will deliver him."

St. Lewis was accustomed when preaching afterwards in Valencia to relate these facts and to draw lessons from them for the instruction of the people. The idolatrous priest who was the guardian of these bones, he used to relate, was bowing in reverence before them with his arms crossed on his breast and prostrate on his knees with every sign of respectful awe, and being asked if he knew any antidote to the poison that had been administered, he was so overcome by his reverence to the worthless bones that he dared not answer, and refused to speak a word. St. Lewis said that it then forcibly occurred to him with what supreme reverence we christians ought to behave in presence of the most Blessed Sacrament, when this poor wretched idolater trembled with such awe before the devil. "I use this word not only because David says (Psalm xciv.), 'All the gods of the gentiles are devils,' but also because the Indians themselves in some regions call their idols devils, and when they intend to pray for some favour from the idol, they say they will ask the devil." \*

They stood in great awe of their idols, and dreaded their vengeance. Their idea seems to have been that God in

\* Antist, No. 67, 68.

heaven was good, but that the devils would injure them as much as possible, and so they perversely argued that it was wiser to offer sacrifices to the devils in order to propitiate them, being ignorant of the truth that the evil spirits could do nothing without the permission of the supreme God and Ruler of all. St. Lewis once asked a chief why he did not come to the instructions, as he had formerly done. The poor native replied, "My devil threatened me and my whole family with death if I went any more to listen to your instructions." "I will soon prove to you how powerless he really is," replied the Saint, and going up to the idol he dealt it a tremendous blow. These practical arguments the Saint often employed successfully.

In his *Essay on the "Interests and Characteristics of the Lives of the Saints,"* Father Faber discusses whether there is any instance recorded of the literal fulfilment of the promise of our Lord in St. Mark, "If they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." Among the numerous examples of the approximate fulfilment of the promise either by the Saint drinking poison, suffering but being preserved miraculously from death, or being prevented by supernatural knowledge from taking the poison, he mentions the case of St. Lewis. "So again St. Lewis Bertrand, the Dominican Missionary, was poisoned by a Caribbee priest, and he suffered excruciating agonies, and lay at death's door for five days, when he was miraculously cured. Here was the substance of the promise, but not the letter."\* This is true, but it seems certain that on at least one occasion in the life of our Saint the promise was literally fulfilled. Father Antist, a most careful and accurate writer, states that "Raphael Figueroa related that it was publicly known in the Indies that Father Lewis, in order to convert a Cacique,

\* "Essay on the Interests and Characteristics of the Lives of the Saints" in Vol. I. of the "Life of St. Francis of Assisi," Oratorian Series.

drank a poisoned cup without hurt, thus to prove the truth of the Christian Faith, and the falseness of the native superstitions." \* This, which by itself would be worth very little, is confirmed by the testimony of Father Aviñone, who tells us that St. Lewis affirmed to Father Andrew Cabrerigo that the account of his having taken poison without hurt in proof of the truth of Christianity was a fact, and he added by way of explanation that God often works miracles of this kind by means of great sinners to the praise and glory of His Holy Name.

For this reason he is represented in art holding in one hand a vessel from which a serpent is issuing. This, with the crucifix having a gun-handle, is the art-sign of St. Lewis Bertrand.

\* Antist, No. 73. Boll.

## CHAPTER VI.

### MISSIONS IN TENERIFFE AND MOMPOX.

Teneriffe—Some months' rest—Suffering—Crucifix—Prophecy—Mompox—  
Heavenly Visitors—Temptation Resisted—Conversion of Tempter—  
Death of the little Lewis—Isle of St. Vincent—Wonderful Cross—  
Attacked in the Isle of St. Thomas—Miraculous Cures—An Epidemic.

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able."—1 COR. x. 13.

"He preached among the Gentiles and made his message heard: he lifted up the sign of the cross among the people; the graven things were confounded and the idols overcome. What sign therefore dost thou show that we may see and may believe thee?"—*Fifth Response at Matins.*



THE next field of Apostolic labour appointed to the Saint, appears to have been the town and neighbourhood of Teneriffe. By this is not meant the celebrated Canary Island on the western coast of Africa, known as the Peak of Teneriffe, but a town of the province of Santa Martha in New Granada, situated on the great river Magdalena. It is now a mere village, but in St. Lewis' time was larger and more populous.

In the last chapter St. Lewis was left in the house of Peter de Salazar, the Governor of the district of St. Martha, whither he had been conveyed by ship under the care of some of his faithful converts. Where the governor resided, or how far St. Lewis was obliged to sail, we are left to conjecture, but this mention of a ship renders it still more

certain that the Caribs, to whom he preached, inhabited one of the islands.

That he remained under the hospitable roof of the governor for several months, we learn from Father Antist ; partly because he was suffering much from fever, the combined effect no doubt of his past labours and exposure, no less than of the deadly poison he had imbibed, which permanently injured his health. How gladly should we hear some details of his manner of life during these months of quiet suffering, of his virtues, his patience, and prayer. What a picture of sanctity Don Pedro the governor might have drawn for us, if he had only chronicled day by day the details, however minute, and the more minute the more interesting and instructive, of his holy guest's life and virtues. We are tempted to feel indignant with him for leaving no record of these months in which he must have been in daily intercourse with the Saint. We are left to imagine the virtues he displayed, by what we know of his character and manner of life at other times, for Don Pedro is silent.

Nor are we informed how or when he was ordered to undertake the mission of Teneriffe, but simply that he was appointed Vicar, either of a small convent of his Order, or over the missionaries of the district, and discharged the duties of parish priest.

Among the few details preserved concerning this mission, it is particularly mentioned that he used a great crucifix in preaching, and obtained influence over the hearts of the people by this striking representation of the sufferings of our Divine Redeemer. The Saint was evidently the same here as elsewhere. The resplendent holiness of his life, the simple eloquence of his burning words, and the convincing power of his miracles, produced the same abundant harvest of souls with which he had been blessed in other districts. The hearts of all were drawn to him by a secret

and invincible attraction. In a short time his converts were numbered by thousands.

A lady named Isabella Mexia, wife of the Spanish Governor of Teneriffe, was among the penitents of the Saint, and soon discovering by experience that he was endowed with the gift of prophecy in an eminent degree, and that God enlightened his mind, so that he could penetrate into the secret thoughts of others, she had unbounded confidence in his words. It was a sore trial to this good lady that her husband was leading a worldly life, neglecting his religion, and devoting himself to the gambling table with passionate eagerness. She complained to the Saint, and asked him how her husband would end. St. Lewis foretold that great trials and afflictions would overwhelm her husband, and not long after the prediction, the Governor was disgraced, and his enemies administered poison to him. Happily for him St. Lewis was near. He comforted the poor dying sinner, converted him to God, gave him Extreme Unction and the Holy Viaticum, and lastly crowned all these spiritual benefits by bestowing upon him miraculously his bodily health.\*

The same lady begged her saintly confessor to tell her whether the child she hoped soon to bring into the world was a boy or a girl, and whether its life would be long. The Saint smiled, but was pleased to satisfy her curiosity. To the first question he replied, "The first that was created on the earth was a man," which Isabella understood to mean that God would bless her with a son. The answer to the second question sobered her joy, for the Saint warned her that "the child would be a fruit that God would soon

\* This is F. Feuillet's account. Avignon has a different version of the story,—according to which St. Lewis predicted to Isabella, that much as she was suffering from her husband's gambling propensities, heavier trials were in store. Soon they arrived, and among others she herself was poisoned, received the last Sacraments, but recovered.

gather for the eternal world." The truth of his words was soon manifest, for the lady was safely delivered of a son; but he died whilst still a child, and in the unstained innocence of the baptism he had received from the Saint.

A servant of this lady used to accompany her mistress to the church, and she noticed, to her surprise, that the Saint was in the habit on these occasions of making the sign of the cross on her servant's forehead. It happened that when St. Lewis was absent on a journey of two or three days' duration, the servant who had been thus favoured was taken suddenly ill and died. On his return the mistress hastened to inform him of her death, and to beg his powerful prayers. "What do you imagine made me sign her forehead with the cross," said the Saint, "except that I foresaw that she was near death and eternal salvation?"

While evangelising the district of Teneriffe St. Lewis inhabited a little hut built near the church, and a Spanish gentleman of the neighbourhood undertook his support. In the house of this benefactor, as will be seen later, he spent the last days of his sojourn in South America.

How long the Saint's mission at Teneriffe continued is not stated, but it appears that the people of Mompo were the next ones privileged to hear the Word of God from his lips, and to witness the holiness of his life. The climate of this place must have rendered the exertions of the missionary more than ordinarily trying. It is situated about 37 leagues south-east of Carthagena, near the head of the delta of the great river Magdalena, and the intense heat of the atmosphere, here untempered by the sea-breeze which renders it more endurable at Carthagena, is almost suffocating. Mosquitos and other stinging insects abound, and the inhabitants are afflicted with the goitre—said to be caused by the water of the Magdalena. Caymans and alligators infest the river, its banks are rendered dangerous



by jaguars and other wild beasts, in the trees hang the terrible boa constrictors, and venomous snakes lie concealed in the long grass.

But of all this St. Lewis thought nothing. His whole conversation was in heaven, and one thing alone he sought in this world—to gain souls for the glory of God. At Mompox, as elsewhere, he baptized some thousands of natives, and his sanctity and miracles gained for him the name of “The Holy Religious,” by which he was generally known among the Indians.

Captain Bernard de Betancour was the Spanish Governor of Mompox, and he relates a wonderful event of which he himself was the privileged witness, some time during the stay of St. Lewis at Mompox. It was Friday in the fourth week of Lent. St. Lewis had been preaching upon the wonderful mercy of Jesus Christ in raising Lazarus from the tomb, and he no doubt strenuously urged his audience to listen to the voice of the same merciful Lord who was calling them from the grave of sin to the true life of grace. About eight in the evening the governor went to the Saint's door to arrange a convenient hour for confession. The door stood partly open, and as he approached, Captain Betancour was astonished to see the excessive brightness of the light which issued from the cell. It appeared as if the whole room were illuminated with the most powerful lamps. On looking into the cell his amazement was increased by seeing St. Lewis kneeling in prayer and conversing with two venerable men of majestic demeanour, whose very garments shone as if they had been clothed with the splendour of the sun in its power.

This wonderful spectacle must have recalled to the mind of Bernard the gospel account of the Transfiguration, when the countenance of our Divine Lord became bright like the sun and His garments white even as no fuller on earth can make white. Captain Bernard was stupefied by the

sight : he knew not whether to retreat quietly or to remain a silent witness of the heavenly prodigy, but in his agitation he moved the door, and St. Lewis, disturbed by the sound, rose to inquire the reason of the interruption. The agitation and astonishment of the captain was so great, that not only did he feel powerless to utter a word, but was unable in his confusion to find his way without the guidance of St. Lewis. Who were these two celestial visitors enlightening for a moment the dark earth with the splendour of their glorified souls ? Captain Betancour maintained that they were St. Ambrose and the angelic doctor St. Thomas, for they resembled the pictures of those two Saints with which he was familiar. On another occasion also Captain Betancour was favoured by the sight of St. Lewis in ecstasy during the sacrifice of the Mass. The consecration was just accomplished, and the Captain finding that the Saint was rapt out of himself in supernatural contemplation, at last recalled him to consciousness by pulling his chasuble.

A striking and most instructive account of a grievous temptation generously resisted by the Saint, may be introduced here, though the Archbishop of St. Domingo, who relates it in his history of the Mexican Province of the Friar Preachers, does not state the place in which it occurred. While St. Lewis was preaching in New Granada, he had occasion to admonish a man of distinguished position who was giving grave and public scandal. He admired the zeal of the Saint, he could not deny the gravity of the scandal he was causing by living in open adultery, but his passion was so strong that even the earnest exhortations of St. Lewis failed in their object. Wearied at length by the repeated efforts of the holy missionary to convert him, and terrified as well as indignant at a threat of public denunciation and excommunication, he listened to a detestable suggestion of the evil one, and determined to try to silence the Saint by tempting him to follow his own wicked

example. "He is only human," whispered the tempter, "induce him to commit crime, and he will then be ashamed to reproach you, and will leave you in peace." With this diabolical intention, a woman of ill fame was hired to present herself at night at the door of the Saint's little cabin. She spared no pains to render herself attractive, hoping thus to overcome him, who by God's grace was to conquer her for Christ. St. Lewis, who was watching in prayer, heard the bell of his little house ringing when it was nearly midnight. Thinking that some one required the last Sacraments, he came with a light to the door to inquire who needed his services. When he saw the woman in gay attire covered with vain and worldly ornaments he quickly fastened the door, and without speaking a word he signed himself repeatedly with the cross on his forehead and breast, hastily ran before the altar in the church, and baring his shoulders began to scourge himself to blood, praying God to deliver him from temptation. The miserable woman tried to speak, but hearing the blows and the prayers which the Saint uttered aloud, she was filled with amazement, and soon with feelings of remorse and true contrition. She sank on her knees outside the church, and joined her sighs and prayers with those of St. Lewis. For three hours this extraordinary scene lasted, the Saint praying before the altar, and the now-converted sinner begging forgiveness outside. Tradition states that after the Saint had fallen exhausted to the ground from the violence of the scourging he had inflicted on his innocent body, St. Mary Magdalen and St. Catherine the Martyr appeared in glory to comfort him. After three hours' prayer he went again to the door, where he found the poor woman weeping and trembling and begging his forgiveness and prayers. "Go, my daughter, in peace," said the holy man, "and take heed never to fall into a like sin, lest the anger of God should overtake you when you least expect it." She related all the circumstances to the wretched man who had

hired her for so infamous a purpose, and he, overcome by remorse, threw himself at the feet of St. Lewis, humbly begged his forgiveness, and promised to be guided in all things by his direction. The holy man received him with great sweetness, and he became a sincere penitent, reformed his life, and ever regarded St. Lewis as a Saint, who by his faithfulness and courage had not only preserved his own innocence unsullied, but had also converted two public and hardened sinners.

Whilst living for a time in a place called Turvaco, the Saint had baptized a native youth and given him his own name, Lewis.

He undertook his instruction himself, taught him to serve Mass, and as he found his care returned by docility and affectionate obedience, it is not surprising that the Saint grew very fond of his adopted son. No doubt he hoped to discover signs of priestly vocation in the boy as he grew older, in order that he might labour for the souls of his benighted fellow-countrymen. This, however, was not in the order of God's providence. The natives of Turvaco were in distress on account of the scarcity of maize, and they consulted a diabolical oracle in charge of the heathen priests. The answer was, that no grain would be forthcoming and no help vouchsafed unless they offered the little boy adopted by the holy missionary as a sacrifice. The infatuated natives waited their opportunity, and when the Saint had gone on some journey of charity they seized little Lewis and murdered him at the shrine of their false gods. To deceive the Saint they circulated a report that the boy had been walking on the banks of the river Magdalena, and that a cayman had rushed out of the water and devoured him. St. Lewis, however, discovered the truth, and though his grief was extreme in losing his young and virtuous companion, from whose fair promise he had hoped great things, he still readily adored the holy will of God

and rejoiced at the speedy entrance of his young convert into heaven.

More than one of the West India Islands were visited by St. Lewis during his missionary journeys, but at what period or in what manner is not definitely mentioned by any of his biographers. All that can be done, therefore, is to lay before the reader the detached fragments of information which occur in the various lives, and which are like unconnected footprints remaining here and there on the sand, while the rest have been obliterated by the waves. The ever-flowing waves of time efface in great measure the trace of even the grandest lives, and what is rescued and recorded is often far less than what is forgotten or never known.

Thus we read of him preaching to a multitude of natives collected in a great plain in the island of St. Vincent.\* Amongst the audience who were entranced by the ardent zeal of this extraordinary missionary, whose words they all understood as if their language was his native tongue, though he spoke in Spanish, was one of the most powerful Caciques of the island. He was arrayed in a long flowing robe of scarlet, with bare feet and large pendants of gold in his ears. The Saint spoke of the Cross of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and of the great Sacrifice offered for the salvation of all mankind on the altar of the Cross. After the sermon the Cacique reverently approached the holy preacher, and asked what kind of thing this cross was, the virtues of which he had just heard so highly extolled. Great trees surrounded the open space on which the Saint had collected the multitude, and to answer the question clearly, he leant against the immense trunk of one of these trees, and extended his arms in the form of a cross. When he stepped away from the tree, every one was astounded to

\* One of the Windward Islands, belonging now to the British Crown.

see the perfect impression of the holy sign left upon the trunk where the Saint had stood. This miracle had a powerful effect. All the Indians burst out into loud acclamations of wonder. The Cacique returned at once to his house, but before long he reappeared, and drawing near to St. Lewis with every mark of veneration, he fell on his knees, took the holy man's hand, and begged him to come with his companion into his house. Here Lewis remained for nine days, instructing and baptizing not only the Cacique and his family, but a large number of natives besides. Before leaving this family of newly converted Christians, he wrote down for their instruction the chief articles of the Christian faith, the ten commandments, and the more necessary prayers, according to his ordinary custom elsewhere. This beautiful incident is the only glimpse we have of the Saint's Mission in the island of St. Vincent. We are not even told when it happened, how long the Saint was on the island, how he reached it, or, in fact, anything but this one scene. We should probably have been equally ignorant of this, had it not been that the Saint had here a companion.

One anecdote is also preserved of his Mission in the island of St. Thomas.\* He was preaching under the shade of a spreading plane-tree, when a large body of savage Indians advanced towards him armed with stones and slings, threatening to put him to death. An ecclesiastic warned the Saint of the approaching danger, and begged him to fly at once to a place of shelter, but he fearlessly answered, "Be not afraid; far from having power to stone me, they will be able to do me no hurt." He immediately began to preach with greater energy than before; the savage warriors stood transfixed, drinking in the words of life, and instead of killing the man of God, such was his

\* One of the Virgin Islands, not far from Porto Rico, belonging to Denmark.

influence, that more than two hundred received from his hands the gift of eternal life through the Sacrament of Baptism.

As miracles are the special signs to infidel nations of the truth of the Christian faith, it would have been surprising indeed if God had not confirmed the preaching of His servant with continued prodigies. Some have been related ; the majority will never be known in this world ; a few have been preserved by the Saint's biographers without dates or names of places, but as distinct anecdotes. One day a Christian Indian named Marinitta sought St. Lewis in the utmost affliction, and throwing herself at his feet, entreated him to help her sister, still an infidel, dying from protracted childbirth, in which delivery was considered impossible. "Trust in God, my child," was the answer ; "your sister will recover. Take this belt and gird your sister with it. In the meantime I will go and pray for her recovery." In half an hour Marinitta came with the glad tidings that her sister was safe, and the happy mother of a fine and healthy boy. The infant was shortly afterwards baptized by the Saint, and with him the father and mother and many of their friends.

Another poor Indian woman implored the holy man to obtain from God the cure of certain ulcerous wounds on her neck, which had long tormented her and were incurable. The tender-hearted Saint made the sign of the Cross upon her, and taking a handkerchief, wrapt it round her neck, saying cheerfully, "Beg of God to help you, my daughter, and be sure that He will. Return here to-morrow." She obeyed. When the handkerchief was removed the next day, no sign whatever of the terrible complaint remained. No scar even could be perceived. "Father Lewis," cried out his companion in amazement, "this is indeed a wonderful miracle !" "Hold your peace, beloved son," replied the Saint ; "this is God's work. I can do nothing. This is God's goodness in order to convert these poor Indians."

In a neighbouring place he cured another girl of a similar complaint by merely making the sign of the Cross.

When the Saint was preaching at Tubera, where he converted all the inhabitants, a young Spanish lady named Agnes de Mendoza had been suffering from fever for two months in the house of an aunt with whom she was living. As medical aid seemed useless, they invited the holy Father to say Mass in the house and to pray for the sufferer. He consented, and after the Holy Sacrifice he read a Gospel over the poor girl, making over her the sign of the Sacred Cross. The same day the fever left her.

In his missionary excursions through various parts of New Granada, the Saint found the natives dying in large numbers of a peculiar contagious complaint, which had spread so widely that it could rightly be termed a pestilence. Moved with compassion, he went from house to house sprinkling the inhabitants with holy water and blessing them with the sign of the Cross; the Indians remarked that no one who had received the holy Father's blessing died of the epidemic. One of his religious companions was ill, and an Indian said to him, "Why do you not have recourse to the holy Father? He could cure you." These epidemics, and there were many, among them the terrible smallpox, partly account for the depopulation of the Indies during the period of the Spanish conquests. In 1588 a disease resembling what is now called diphtheria appeared in Cartagena, and travelled over the whole continent of South America to the Straits of Magellan, killing the feeble Indians in immense numbers. So fatal was this pestilence, that it is said not one in a hundred of the native children attacked were saved; and so dreadfully was it feared by the timid natives, that when a father of a family found himself attacked by it, forthwith he chose his burial-place near the church, and then, pointing it out to some missionary, exclaimed, "Here, Father, you have to bury me, my wife



and my children." \* We can well understand how deeply the sight of such suffering among the helpless and confiding natives must have afflicted the tender heart of the Saint, and the joy he must have experienced in exercising those miraculous powers which were the result of his heroic virtue and his intimate union with the Giver of life and health. One of the greatest consolations of the Saints, the fruit of their own austerities, is the consciousness of power to assist others. In the Appendix will be found the peculiar form of blessing first used by St. Vincent Ferrer, by which St. Lewis cured multitudes of sick, and brought relief to the sufferings of countless others. See Appendix B.

\* Helps' "Spanish Conquest," vol. iv. bk. xx. ch. 6.

## CHAPTER VII.

### RETURN TO SPAIN.

Reasons for Return—Letter of Las Casas—Lewis writes to the General—Elected Prior of Santa Fè—Unsuccessful Voyage—Letter of General—Lewis returns to Teneriffe—Death of Governor's Wife—Homeward Voyage—Atlantic Gale—F. Lewis Vero—His Missionary Career and holy death—Arrival of St. Lewis in Valencia.

"O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God ! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ? or who hath been His counsellor ?"—ROM. xi. 33, 34.

"The floods have lifted up their waves with the noise of many waters. Wonderful are the surges of the sea ; wonderful is the Lord on high."—PSALM xcii. 3, 4.

**A**FTER the short period of seven years, the apostolic career of St. Lewis in America came to an abrupt termination. It was not the stroke of death that ended a missionary labour so visibly blest by God, nor was it the sudden recall of Superiors needing his presence for other works, but it was at his own request that the General sent letters commanding his return to Spain.

As it cannot but appear surprising that the Saint should desire to leave the vast regions of the New World, where the harvest was so abundant and the labourers so few, it will be necessary to enter into some explanation of the reasons which induced him to beg permission to leave America.

In one word, it was the wickedness of many of the Spanish officials, and their atrocious barbarity to the poor natives, who had at first received them as superior beings, "Children of the Sun." St. Lewis, in common with the other missionaries, had found this melancholy fact to be the most serious obstacle in their work of conversion, and one far more difficult to surmount than those arising from the ignorance and superstition of the natives, the diversity of language and dialect, and the vast extent of the country they inhabited. The rapacity and tyranny of the Spaniards naturally prejudiced the untutored minds of the Indians against the Christian religion, and the story is well known of an Indian asking if any Spaniards would be found in heaven, and expressing no desire to go there himself if he would meet any of his oppressors. The missionaries had continually to lament that what they preached to the natives about the sanctity of the true religion, and the virtues that ought to adorn a Christian, was so often contradicted by the immoral lives, the avarice, and the unjust and barbarous cruelties of many who were Christians in faith but not in spirit.

Although most stringent orders had been issued, both by King Ferdinand and afterwards by the Emperor Charles V., that every possible facility must be afforded the natives for being instructed in the Christian religion, the officials, so far from the mother country as to be practically out of control, appeared to have no other view than to amass fortunes in the shortest possible time. Scenes such as the following must have been too common. St. Lewis was one day instructing a large number of natives in a church, when his sermon was suddenly interrupted by profane imprecations, and an officer rushing into the sacred building, abused the poor natives as idle dogs who would not work, and drove them out of the church with heavy blows of his stick. Lewis was unable to protect them from this

violence ; his remonstrances were disregarded ; he was obliged to see his audience dispersed, the house of God desecrated, and the good work of conversion impiously and unlawfully interrupted.

This is but one example of the way in which the work of the missionaries was opposed by the very men who ought to have given them the greatest assistance. Every day fresh instances of unprovoked cruelty occurred ; numbers of the natives were reduced to slavery in open violation of the laws passed for their protection by the Spanish Government ; and often the missionaries had to witness the foulest massacres, on some false or frivolous pretext, without being able to offer any resistance.

These growing abuses, which the Bishop of Cartagena with all the ecclesiastical authorities had striven against in vain, had suggested to the Saint's mind the idea of returning to Europe. He was already somewhat disposed to petition for a recall, when he received a letter from the illustrious Bishop Bartholomew de las Casas, who was then residing in Spain after resigning the See of Chiapa. In this letter the Bishop insisted strongly on the necessity of refusing absolution to the Superintendents, and, in fact, to all Spaniards who, contrary to the laws of God and man, had reduced the Indians to a state of slavery, or held possession for their own benefit of those already in servitude. All who thus ill treated the natives, enriched themselves by plunder, and despised the royal edicts for the protection of the Indians, Las Casas maintained were unworthy of the Sacraments of the Church.

Now St. Lewis perfectly agreed with this doctrine, which was the common opinion of the missionaries, and as many of the Spaniards resorted to him to confession, this forcible letter of the venerable protector of the Indians filled him with anxiety and apprehension, and appears to have been the immediate occasion of his determining to

apply to the Father General for an obedience to return to Europe.

The Bull of Canonisation distinctly assigns the evils arising from the oppression of the natives as the reason for his desire to leave America. "Seeing the oppression of the natives by certain officials, who did not hesitate to wound and even kill them, and finding that he could not prevent while he was unable to tolerate such cruelties, he obtained an obedience to return into Spain."

Respect to the authority of the Bull forbids us to doubt that these were the motives that decided St. Lewis to abandon his missionary career. But still, after weighing all the considerations urged by Las Casas, and allowing to the full the difficulties of the position, it is certainly somewhat surprising that a man so entirely free from all fear of the world, so zealous for the salvation of souls, and penetrated with so ardent a desire for martyrdom, should have been moved by the letter to leave the country where he was saving so many souls.

Nevertheless, it certainly does seem certain that, although other reasons may have combined to influence him, he considered the cruel oppression of the Indians an evil so inveterate, and a difficulty in the way of the missionaries so formidable, that he desired to depart from the country, lest he might even in a remote degree appear to co-operate with what he felt powerless to prevent.

But a difficulty still remains. For the missions could not be abandoned by all; some priests must continue to face the storm, and if the rapacity of the Spanish adventurers seemed on the increase, that would appear a strong reason for holy and zealous Religious to remain as the only protectors of the oppressed natives. Father Lewis Vero, the companion and friend of the Saint, continued to labour for the conversion of the natives, in spite of every obstacle, till his death in the convent of Upar in 1588, and it was by no

means the intention of Las Casas to discourage St. Lewis in his work. On the contrary, in that very letter he most strongly urged him to persevere in it with the utmost vigour. Moreover, if the Spanish officials were unworthy of absolution on account of their unjust and tyrannical conduct, no one would have been more likely than the Saint to move them to repentance, or, if they remained impenitent, no one would more resolutely have refused them the Sacraments. If the refusal had cost his life, nothing would have more heartily rejoiced him.

We must not, then, for a moment suppose that a mere pusillanimous fear of difficulties determined him to abandon a work to which God had so specially appointed him and had crowned with results so magnificent. The desire to sacrifice himself for the salvation of souls had certainly not diminished since he had been engaged on the American mission ; on the contrary, the success of his labours had increased the longing he had ever felt to seek and save that which was lost at any personal sacrifice. The whole history of his life would contradict the notion that any motive, merely human, influenced him in this grave crisis of his life.

What supernatural consideration, then, determined him to fly from the sight of evils he could not prevent, and for which, therefore, he could in no sense be held responsible ? It is evident that he was enlightened supernaturally to know that the term of labour appointed for him in America had now ended, and that God had provided work for him in Europe. No one can doubt that, sorrowful to the heart at the sight of the evils he was every day compelled to witness, and distressed at the obstacles thrown in the way of the conversion of the heathen, he sought the guidance of the Holy Ghost by prolonged and earnest prayer ; and so numerous and striking are the instances in his life of extraordinary illumination in much less serious affairs, that there

is no difficulty in supposing special inspiration to guide him in a matter of such immense importance. All the circumstances of his departure indicate such an inspiration. In spite of his election as Prior of Santa Fé, besides many other difficulties, he appeared calmly but decidedly convinced that his mission in America had ended, and that God was calling him elsewhere. When elected, he declared at once that he should never reach Santa Fé; and when the time was passed for the sailing of the fleet, he quietly said that God, who willed him to return to Spain, would not allow the ships to sail without him.

This supposition of a special revelation solves the whole difficulty, and accounts at once for his desire to abandon his work and to return home. It would be as presumptuous to inquire why God assigned only seven years as the limit to a mission so wonderful in its results as to ask why the public life of our Lord Himself extended over no more than three years. But perhaps we may venture to suppose that God intended St. Lewis to infuse some of his own apostolic spirit into the novices of Valencia, and thus to educate zealous missionaries to carry the light of the gospel into the forests and over the plains of America. Also, as a holy man said to one of the Religious, it appeared as if God had commanded St. Lewis to return in order that as Prior of the great convent of Valencia he might complete and perfect the reformation of its discipline.

His decision once made, St. Lewis took advantage of the first fleet that sailed from Carthagena to send a letter to his religious brethren in Valencia, begging them to obtain from the General an order for his return. This letter occasioned the utmost joy to all the Religious, who were now as anxious to forward his wishes as they had been to defeat them on his departure from Spain. Father Antist was at that time studying in the celebrated convent of Salamanca, and the General was himself in Spain engaged in the visitation of

the convents. The Order was then governed by Father Vincent Justiniani, a man of distinguished virtue and learning, who was afterwards created Cardinal by St. Pius V. Very probably the General was at Salamanca, for the Religious of Valencia commissioned Father Antist to obtain his commands for the recall of St. Lewis.

The General felt at first very unwilling to grant the petition. He was well aware of the marvellous effects of the Saint's mission in America, and he hesitated for some time before taking the responsibility of recalling him and depriving New Granada of its Apostle. But at length, after recommending the matter to God, he decided to accede to the request, and entrusted to Father Antist three copies of a letter commanding Lewis to return. Being before the days of mail-steamers, it was always a question of considerable doubt whether a letter would ever reach a colonist in the far-distant regions of Spanish America. This was the reason that three copies of the General's letter were sent to Antist, the hope being that one at least might be delivered to St. Lewis. Two of these letters Father Antist forwarded to Valencia, the third he gave to a Spaniard who intended to embark in the next fleet that sailed for Carthagená.

Meanwhile St. Lewis had been elected Prior of the Convent of Santa Fé de Bogotá. Father Peter de Miranda, the Vicar-General of the Congregation of St. Antoninus, in the kingdom of New Granada, had proposed to the Fathers of Santa Fé the idea of electing St. Lewis as their Prior, representing to them that a Religious of his merit should not be allowed to lie hidden in remote missions, but that the capital city of the kingdom, where the Archbishop and the Viceroy resided, ought to have the advantage of his preaching and example.

This was very probably intended in great measure as a means of retaining so valuable a man and preventing his contemplated return to Spain, the news of which afflicted



all who heard it. However this may be, the Fathers gladly acquiesced in the suggestion of the Vicar, and unanimously elected St. Lewis. Father Peter de Miranda was rejoiced to confirm their wise choice, and despatched a Religious at once with letters to the Prior of St. Joseph's in Carthagena, informing him of the election and directing him to command Father Lewis to accept the office and to repair at once to Santa Fé. The Prior accordingly immediately sent for Lewis, who was engaged in some mission or living in one of the little "Houses of doctrine" dependent on St. Joseph's.

When the Saint arrived at Carthagena, the Prior announced to him his election to this office, expressing his own satisfaction and that of all the Fathers, at the same time telling him that he must not hesitate about accepting the post, for the orders of Father Peter were peremptory, and there was no course open to him but to depart at once for the city of Santa Fé.

Lewis was greatly afflicted. Honours he had ever fled as the proud seek to avoid humiliations. He was anxious to depart to Europe and there to hide himself in obscurity, but now he found himself elected to occupy a post of great responsibility; he knew that every one was looking forward to his arrival in Santa Fé as a public benefit. His humility made him dread the subtle attacks of vainglory in seeing himself thus highly valued, and his grief was profound.

But there was no option. The command of the Vicar General was clear and definite, and obedience was his duty. With sentiments, therefore, of sincere humility and self-abasement he accepted the office, but to those who offered him their congratulations, he declared his conviction that he should never reach the city of Santa Fé. God's will led him elsewhere, and he well knew that the period of his American Mission had ended.

He started, however, at once for Baranca, a harbour on

the Magdalena, about fifty-five miles from Carthagena and ten from the sea, where the Spanish merchant ships loaded and discharged cargoes which were conveyed up and down the river in large native canoes formed from the trunks of trees rowed by Indians. The voyage up the river from Baranca to Santa Fé de Bogota occupied under ordinary circumstances from twenty-four to twenty-six days, unless the boats touched at a place called Mariquita on the opposite bank of the river, and about seventy miles from Santa Fé. Six canoes, laden with merchandise for Santa Fé, being found ready to start, the Saint and his companions at once embarked. All went well with the other five canoes, but that in which the Saint sailed appeared to be carrying another Jonas. No way could be made in spite of the utmost exertions of the Indians. The other canoes were soon out of sight; contrary winds of great violence arose; the boat sprung a leak, and it seemed a question whether she could continue afloat. The Indians murmured against the captain, whom they blamed for these misfortunes, and the result was, that instead of reaching Santa Fé in twenty-six days, a month was occupied in traversing only half the distance. They were thus tediously battling with the adverse wind and stream, making the slowest possible progress, when another boat hove in sight, began rapidly to overtake them, and as it approached hailed them to inquire whether that was the canoe in which the Prior of Santa Fé had embarked. On the reply being given, the strange boat soon hauled alongside, and Father Lewis received the letter of the General from the messenger to whom Father Antist had entrusted it in Salamanca. With tears of joy and gratitude he poured forth his thanks to God for his release from the office he dreaded, at the same time acknowledging his deep obligation to the messenger for so faithfully executing the trust committed to him.

When this letter had been safely delivered, everything changed as to the progress of the voyage. The canoe, making rapid headway, arrived after a speedy passage at the little town of Angostura on the right bank of the river, 180 miles from Santa Fé de Bogota. Here St. Lewis landed; wrote to Father Peter de Miranda explaining the orders he had received from the General, and enclosed a formal resignation of the office of Prior. He also wrote to the Friars of Santa Fé, thanking them humbly for the honour they had done him by the election, expressing his unfitness for the office, and the absolute necessity of his immediate return to Spain. We can imagine the disappointment of the Religious, who had flattered themselves that they had secured the Saint for their Superior.

After despatching these letters, Lewis again embarked to descend the river, and in a few days arriving at Teneriffe, was received with cordial welcome by John Bernal, the Governor, who had treated him so kindly when he had the charge of that Mission. This generous friend now took upon himself the cost of providing everything necessary for his visitor during the long voyage he was about to commence. Two days after his arrival news was brought from Carthagena that the homeward-bound fleet was about to sail within eight days. The necessary preparations were hurriedly finished. The Governor then warned his guest that he must depart at once if he desired to sail in that fleet, but St. Lewis calmly replied, "The Lord God, whose will it is that I should return to Spain, will not suffer the fleet to depart without me. I will start when it is necessary." Thus he remained for a fortnight longer.

Within that time Don John Bernal's wife was safely delivered of a son, and the Saint heard her confession and baptized the infant; and although it seemed certain that the galleons must have sailed, he still remained, foreseeing, without doubt, the tragical event that would shortly happen.

He had warned those in charge of the sick lady that it would be dangerous to leave her by herself; that they must be careful to watch her continually; but seeing nothing to apprehend, and doubtless considering that in spite of his sanctity they were the best judges in such matters, they disobeyed, leaving their patient asleep. An immense python came through the open window. The noise awakened the poor lady, and finding herself alone with this terrible monster, she rushed downstairs in a paroxysm of fright, alarming the whole house by her screams. A few hours after, she died of the effects of the shock she had thus received in her weak condition. The Saint assisted her during her last moments, and watched the whole night in prayer for her soul. The next morning, after offering the Holy Sacrifice for her repose, he preached at the funeral. After consoling the disconsolate husband he thus addressed him: "The Lord God has enabled me thus to discharge the debt of gratitude that I owe to your lordship. I have assisted your wife in her illness and at her death; I have spent the night in prayer for her repose, and have preached at her funeral. I cannot repay you in any other way for your generous kindness, now I must take my leave. But I warn you before departing not to admit into your house a person who will come on a certain day, for many evils will enter at the same time." The Governor, who ought to have learnt confidence in the wisdom of the Saint from his wife's case, was foolish enough to disobey this parting admonition, and soon experienced the truth of the prediction in the evils that afterwards befell him.

It seemed as if the homeward-bound fleet had only waited for the Saint. Immediately after his arrival in Carthagera it weighed anchor, and St. Lewis left the country where he had laboured so strenuously during seven years. Had the Indians been aware that their great benefactor, friend, and servant was thus leaving their shore, a wail of sorrow

would doubtless have gone up to heaven from the whole kingdom of New Granada. The Saint also must have yearned after the spiritual children he was thus leaving in the hands of cruel and oppressive masters, though he seemed entirely convinced that God no longer willed him to remain in the New World, but to labour henceforth for the salvation of souls in Spain. Whether in the New or the Old World, God's Will was the one object he sought.

During the voyage the fleet encountered a tremendous Atlantic gale. The vessel in which St. Lewis sailed suffered severely in the tempest. The raging wind carried away much of the rigging, sails were scarcely bent before they were torn to shreds, the rudder, nearly unshipped, was in imminent danger of being broken by the waves; immense billows threatened to overwhelm them, the vessel laboured fearfully and seemed on the point of foundering. When the danger appeared desperate, St. Lewis, who during all the confusion of the storm had remained quietly in prayer, stationed himself on the windward side, and as the mountainous waves with their angry crests of foam, threatening to swallow up the ship, approached, he made the saving sign of the Cross. The wild waters recognised the servant of Him who had said to them, "Peace, be still!" and as they approached they seemed to lose all power, and to injure the ship no more than the ripples of a summer calm. The ship's company were astounded at this miracle, but St. Lewis, fearing any temptation to vainglory, shrank away in confusion to hide himself from notice. Hardly had he disappeared than the mighty billows again thundered on the ship, carrying everything before them. Just as the lions and tigers of the Roman amphitheatre lost all their native fierceness before the pure gaze of some Christian virgin, but turned upon others with increased ferocity, so did these monsters of the deep reverence the servant of their Maker, but raged with greater fury when he departed.

The danger becoming extreme, the sailors besought St. Lewis for the love of God to assist them, so that, yielding at last to their entreaties, he took up his former station, again making the sign of the cross. Immediately the danger ceased, and before long the sea became perfectly calm.

The Saint spoke afterwards of this miracle to one of his friends, and among other things said, "You must not imagine that such things are proofs of sanctity; they are the effects of faith. Did not our Lord promise the power of working miracles to those who had faith? God bestowed more light on Lucifer than He has given me, and yet Lucifer was lost; Judas possessed more power than I, and yet he hanged himself in despair. All this may happen to me, for it is written that no man in this life knoweth whether he be worthy of love or hatred." Besides showing the profound humility of the Saint, these words are a convincing proof of the truth of the miracle, for unless the fact had been undeniable, he would have spoken in a very different strain. Great, meanwhile, was his confusion at the admiration which his miracle excited in the ship; no one knew how to thank God and the holy Father sufficiently; captain, officers, passengers, crew, one and all considered St. Lewis as their deliverer.

It will be interesting, before closing the history of this part of the Saint's life, to say a word about his holy companion, Father Lewis Vero. He had left Spain with St. Lewis, and they had been united in Valencia for some years by the bonds of the truest christian friendship. They laboured together in the New World, sometimes undertaking together long missionary journeys, but unhappily no details of their intercourse are preserved. In fact, neither Father Antist nor Aviñone mention Father Vero at all, and for the few following particulars, which are only enough to make us desire to know more of so remarkable a man,

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we are indebted to Father Roze, who has taken them from the historian Zamora and introduced them into his interesting book, "Les Dominicains en Amérique."

While St. Lewis was evangelising the natives in the province of St. Martha, Father Vero was employed in the same work in the populous valley of Upar in the kingdom of New Granada. His missionary labours extended also to Ocana, a town nearly three hundred miles north-east of Santa Fé de Bogotà, and along the banks of the Zapatosa lake, in the province of Mompox. The mines in these neighbourhoods attracted a population which greatly required the zealous efforts of a truly apostolic man.

We may conclude that his missionary career was one of no ordinary stamp, from the fact that God bestowed on him, in common with St. Lewis, the gift of being understood by the Indians while speaking only his native language.

St. Lewis esteemed Father Vero highly. Being on one occasion pressed by a friend to pray particularly for an affair of importance, he replied, "You will do better to ask my companion Lewis Vero, whose prayers have more power with the Divine Majesty than mine."

The apostolic labour of this holy man continued without intermission for twenty-six years, from 1562 to 1588. During the whole of this period he practised many voluntary austerities, and persevered in constant prayer. Natures the most savage yielded before the sweet and gentle yet earnest preaching of such an apostle; his work was crowned by the conversion of a multitude of natives.

He died in 1588 in the convent of Upar, of which he had been one of the founders and the first superior.

As the convent was not finished at the time of his death, the religious buried him in the parish church of Upar. Fourteen years afterwards the body of the holy missionary was found perfectly incorrupt, emitting a perfume of exquisite fragrance.

A Provincial of the Dominican Order, on visiting the church, was surprised to find a large number of sweetly singing birds in all parts of the church, perched on the chairs, flying from side to side, evidently fearing no danger. On inquiry, he was told that these birds, having appeared directly Father Lewis Vero had been buried in the church, had not failed to visit the church every day since that time. Being regarded as heavenly visitors, singing the praises of the servant of God, they had been revered and never disturbed.

After the storm already described, the rest of the voyage was favourable, and on the 18th of October, St. Luke's day, in the year 1569, St. Lewis once more set foot on Spanish soil. He landed at Seville, but instead of remaining there to rest after the fatigues of the voyage, started immediately on foot for Valencia. Arriving late in the evening, he was obliged to accept a night's lodging from his brother, who lived outside the city, near the Augustinian monastery of our Lady of Help. That was indeed a night of joy in his brother's house, for when they had parted from him seven years before, none of his friends dared to hope that they would ever again see him in this world. The news of his arrival in Spain had reached Valencia before him, and it required all the authority of Father Lawrence Lopez, the Prior, to prevent the whole community from rushing out to meet the beloved Father to escort him home in triumph; "for so intense," writes Antist, "was the joy occasioned by his return, that almost every one begged permission to meet him; the Prior especially was almost out of himself with spiritual gladness when he considered the blessing God was bestowing on the community during his period of office."

On arriving at the convent, St. Lewis declared that he had returned home in order to begin to serve God in good



earnest, and to become once more a novice among his brethren. His first act, after prostrating to receive the blessing of the Prior and making a visit to the church, was to place all that he had brought with him in the hands of the superior, especially certain sums of money that had been bestowed upon him in alms. This he did from love of poverty, although, says Father Antist, "he could without difficulty have obtained permission from the Provincial to spend that money in the purchase of books." Far from considering that the immense fatigues, sufferings, and labours of his South American mission entitled him to any exemption from the common rule, he immediately applied himself to all the exercises of religious life with the utmost fervour, as if he were really just beginning his novitiate anew. He proved by his actions that he really looked upon himself as having yet to begin the spiritual life, as the last and least in the community, so that his profound humility moved every one to astonishment and admiration.

### Part III.

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#### *FAITHFUL SERVICE.*

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“Behold My servant, I will uphold him ; My elect, My soul delighteth in him : I have given My Spirit upon him.”—ISA. xlii. 1.

“A man of understanding is faithful to the law of God, and the law is faithful to him.”—ECCLES. xxxiii. 3.



## CHAPTER I.

### PRIOR OF THE CONVENT OF ST. ONUPHRIUS.

Year of rest—Friendship with B. Nicolas Factor—Lewis made Prior of St. Onuphrius—State of the Convent—Buildings—The Prior's Bankers—How the Saint paid Debts—Crucifix—Miraculous Bread—Carthusians—Lay brothers on Quest—Seclusion—Arms of Religious—Fear of Robbers—Sermons—Christmas Night—Lent at Moncada—Supernatural Assistance to Several.

"And He said to them, Come apart into a desert place and rest a little."  
—ST. MARK vi. 31.

"Seek ye therefore first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you."—ST. MATT. vi. 33.

**F**OR a year after his return was St. Lewis allowed to remain in the seclusion of his convent unburdened with any office. There is no mention even of his preaching. It is a year of which his biographers record nothing. His superiors, no doubt, left him unmolested, hoping that he might obtain some rest of body and mind, and might recruit his broken health after the gigantic labours of the past seven years. His health, always feeble, was completely destroyed by the privations and sufferings he had endured; and the poison administered to him by the Indians, though it did not deprive him of life, inflicted a lingering martyrdom upon him from the effects it left in his constitution.

But it seems useless to ask the Saints to rest. Rest to them means heaven; like glory, it is a thing of the next

world, not to be found or expected in this state of combat. It is not stated whether the Saint knew at this period the date of his death, but if so (and it is certain that later he foresaw it), he understood that he had only twelve more years in which to serve God on earth and to heap up treasures in heaven. Rest, therefore, in the ordinary sense of the word, would be his last thought. By a saintly paradox, to rest signified more severe penance, more exact regularity, vigils more protracted, prayers more fervent and prolonged. Thus he reposed in God. This was his interpretation of our Lord's invitation, after the labours of preaching, "Come apart into a desert place and rest a little." It is remarkable that, as his first words of greeting to his brethren had been that he came as a novice to commence the religious life, a full and exact year was providentially allowed him for uninterrupted prayer and contemplation. It was his second novitiate, and a year of preparation for the third and closing period of his holy life, during which he was in office as prior or novice-master until his last illness. Gladly would we draw aside the veil, and learn something of the secrets of that year, precious in the sight of God, but the whole is completely hidden with Christ in God. All we are told is, that the depths of his exceeding humility filled every one with amazement. Far from counting himself to have apprehended, he considered all things that were past as nothing, and completely forgetting them, he stretched forth himself to those that were before; he pressed towards the mark, to the prize of the supernal vocation of God in Christ Jesus (Phil. iii. 13).

It seems to have been at this time that an intimate friendship sprung up between St. Lewis and another Saint, Blessed Nicolas Factor. There is always a peculiar interest in the bond of friendship between two Saints, the love of two purified souls both filled with God and meeting in the

Sacred Heart of their common Lord. It is a reflection of that sweet intercourse of friendship between our Lord Himself and that disciple whom Jesus loved, a friendship which, though the most pure and exalted that earth has ever seen, was still a true union of two human hearts in the love of friendship. The friendship between St. Dominic and St. Francis, a favourite subject of Christian art, has ever been cherished in both their Orders as a memory full of sweet odours, and has ever formed a golden link of love between them.

As a renewal of this holy friendship, and a part of its tradition, we may well delight to remember that one of St. Lewis's most intimate friends was a Franciscan Friar, and any incident that shows their mutual love cannot fail to be of interest.

Blessed Nicolas was six years older than St. Lewis, being born in 1520, on the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul. After a pious boyhood, he was clothed, when only seventeen, as a Franciscan in the Convent of Jesus at Valencia, his native city, and was professed in the year 1538 on the first Sunday in Advent. It would be out of place to attempt any detailed account of his life, which was heroic in every virtue, and distinguished by the number and marvellous nature of the gifts bestowed on him by God.\* He was a perfect follower of St. Francis in poverty, humility, and simplicity, and his ecstasies and visions were as numerous as they were sublime. His charity to the sick, the poor, and to all sufferers, was admirable in the highest degree, and his purity of soul and perfect union with God made him the ready instrument in His hands of converting the most hardened sinners and saving countless souls.

The first time the two Saints met appears to have

\* The life of Blessed Nicolas forms one of the volumes of the first series of Oratorian Lives of the Saints.

been not long after Lewis returned from South America. Blessed Nicolas hearing much of the holy missionary, one day while calling at the Dominican convent asked to be allowed to see Father Lewis. They conversed for some time alone, of course on divine things. When St. Lewis began to speak of God with fervent love, Blessed Nicolas was suddenly rapt in ecstasy and remained motionless. St. Lewis, not knowing that these extraordinary favours were frequent occurrences, feared that he was suddenly taken ill, and called his companion to ask what was amiss with Father Nicolas. "Would to God," replied the Franciscan, "that I had a like illness!" St. Lewis at once understood that the father was in ecstasy, and with several others he returned to the room to wait in reverence till the holy man should regain the use of his external senses. When Nicolas returned to himself, he extended his thumb and finger, calling on all present to kiss them as sanctified by touching the Blessed Sacrament. As no one would consent to allow him in return to kiss their hands, he obliged his companion to permit him to kiss his feet.

The friendship thus begun continued during the rest of St. Lewis's life; there was frequent intercourse between the two holy religious, both of whom entertained a high idea of the virtue of the other. It pleased God to reveal to St. Lewis the supernatural beauty of his friend's soul.

The holy Franciscan going one day to visit him, found at the door of the Dominican convent a poor beggar-man, whose feet he immediately humbly kissed, crying out, "Behold our Lord Jesus Christ!" He then fell into a rapture. St. Lewis was in his confessional, and appearing for a moment out of himself with wonder, exclaimed, "O Jesus! Jesus!" His penitent venturing to inquire the reason of this exclamation, the Saint replied, "Our Lord has just now allowed me to see the virtue and the divine beauty of the soul of Father Nicolas Factor. What holi-

ness ! what a heavenly beauty !” At that instant Father Nicolas was in ecstasy, but when he returned to the life of the senses, he entered the church, saluted his dear friend Lewis, and was then again carried away in rapture.

St. Lewis often said that Father Nicolas was one of the purest souls he had ever known, and so profoundly humble, with a genuine and unfeigned contempt of self, that he had no hesitation in believing that his frequent raptures and ecstasies were real favours from God and free from delusion.

He used to compare him to the blessed in heaven on account of his constant union with God.

“Although Father Nicolas lives on earth among men,” he would say, “his soul is always absorbed in God and lives in heaven, where he enjoys the delights of the angels and leads the life of the blessed.”

Father Nicolas, on the other hand, perfectly recognised the clear vision St. Lewis had of spiritual things, and before visiting him he used to purify his conscience by going to confession, saying that if his sins and imperfections were so abominable in his own sight, they must be still more so to Father Lewis Bertrand.

In October 1570 this second novitiate ended. The convent of St. Onuphrius, situated about two Spanish leagues from Valencia, was without a Prior, and the Fathers unanimously elected St. Lewis to fill the vacant office. He strove to avoid the honour, representing the many bodily infirmities under which he laboured in addition to his want of all the qualities necessary for a good Superior. But obedience overruled all these objections, so that towards the end of October he went to St. Onuphrius \* to be

\* St. Onuphrius was a hermit of the desert. His Life by St. Paphnutius is given from Simon Metaphrastes by Surius on June 12. He lived sixty years in solitude without seeing the face of man.



installed as Prior. The convent was not a very large one. Being, moreover, in a thinly populated district, its revenue was so scanty, that when St. Lewis entered upon his office the house was burdened with debt. But it now possessed a superior who verily and indeed sought first the kingdom of God and His justice, therefore before long it experienced to the full the truth of the Divine promise that all other things should be added thereto. For St. Lewis was not only able to discharge the whole amount of debt hitherto contracted, but he carried out many necessary repairs, besides supplying the community with everything requisite. The friars were soon rewarded for their wisdom in electing him Prior. A strict superior he certainly was; though so gentle and humble, he was terrible to the unruly; small faults against the rule were chastised with severity, though mingled with paternal sweetness; but with himself he was far more severe than with his subjects. He was a living example of his own precepts. Under the government of his predecessor the community had suffered severely from poverty. Provisions were dear; certain extraordinary expenses had necessarily been incurred, the consequence being that a heavy debt had been contracted, which no one saw any means of discharging. At the time of the Saint's election these difficulties had reached their climax. Not only was the building out of repair and the friars unprovided with proper clothing, but they were destitute of the barest necessities of life, corn, wine, and oil. So extreme was their poverty, that as they handed to St. Lewis the letters of the Provincial confirming his election, they were obliged to ask him for money wherewith to buy a little oil.

But under the government of the Saint this destitution soon disappeared, although the spirit of religious poverty was increased. There was no lack of food, the brethren were properly clad, every want was supplied. The debt,

that seemed so incurable an evil, speedily disappeared. Not only was the building repaired, but a new dormitory was erected and other alterations effected. An oven was built that the bread might be baked at home. The sacristy, which before was bare of everything but the merest necessities, was soon abundantly supplied with vestments, sacred vessels, and everything for the use of the church. Then the holy Prior, turning his attention outside the convent walls, planted a vineyard of sufficient size for the use of the house. But this was not all. Near the convent there was a long walk, planted on each side with cypress trees, at the end of which avenue the Saint erected a large Cross, building a kind of chapel over it for its protection. Some remonstrated with him, representing that as the convent was so poor this was an entirely unnecessary expense. The Saint's reply was thoroughly characteristic. "Alas! my brothers, the Lutheran and Calvinist heretics are expending much more at this time in dishonouring and breaking down the sacred Crosses in Germany and France!" He found that by some one's orders the workmen had inscribed his name upon this building, that it might be recognised as his erection, but as this savoured in his mind of vainglory, he ordered it to be immediately removed.

Owing to the poverty of the house, the number of the religious had been very small, but during the government of the Saint it became much more numerous, without any inconvenience being experienced. Religious of other Orders, especially the friars of the Order of St. Francis, were always welcome at St. Onuphrius', where they were treated with cordial hospitality. They always left full of admiration at the charity as well as the zeal of the holy Prior, while they were deeply impressed by the spirit of regular discipline that reigned in every part of the convent. The number of these guests was considerable, for many

were attracted to the convent by the reputation of the Saint.

By what means did St. Lewis change the desert of St. Onuphrius' into a smiling garden? Where did he find all the means for these expenses? The secret of his success was that he made God his debtor by profuse and continual alms. To those guided only by natural prudence his alms must have appeared culpable extravagance. It was like the charity of the two friars in St. Dominic's time, who returning home after a long weary quest with only two loaves to their hungry brethren, gave these, even all they had, to a poor man they met on the road. The holy Patriarch praised them, and St. Lewis was of the same spirit. On coming to St. Onuphrius', destitute as he found its storerooms, he began at once to pour everything he could find into the lap of the poor. No beggar went unrelieved. Bread and wine were bestowed abundantly on all who applied. "Give alms, my brother, without stint," he would say to the procurator, Father Joseph Vindes, who no doubt was alarmed at the generosity of the new Prior; "do not hesitate to give to the Lord our God. Remember the words of David, 'Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor; the Lord will deliver him in the evil day'" (Ps. xl. 1). But the alms bestowed upon those who presented themselves at the convent gate, however large, were by no means sufficient to satisfy the Saint's charity. He sought out the needy, making a particular point of discovering those who were ashamed to ask because they had been reduced to poverty from better circumstances.

Angela Bayarri, a devout woman of the neighbouring town of Museros, being often the dispenser of these charities, gave interesting testimony concerning them. Once the Saint furnished Angela with a sum of money, instructing her to bestow it secretly on a certain lady in a village not

far from the convent. This poor lady was of good family, but had been reduced to abject poverty, which she had concealed by every means in her power. Often not having a dry crust to place before her almost starving children, she had been obliged to boil some herbs or to be content with a few dried figs. Still she could not bring herself to reveal to any one the misery she was enduring. When Angela presented her with the money sent by St. Lewis, "Is this restitution money," she asked, "from any one who has wronged me?" "No," replied her visitor, "it is an alms." The blood mounted to the pale thin cheeks of the proud lady; she hesitated a moment, but at length exclaimed, "An alms! If it is really an alms intended for me, it must be sent by the holy friar, Lewis Bertrand, to whom God must have revealed my distress." Angela acknowledged that she was right. Then the lady consented to take the money, saying, "Verily God has revealed my poverty to His servant, for it is impossible that he could know it by any natural means. May God be thanked for aid so much needed and so unexpected!"

Those who were at first alarmed at the profuse alms of the Saint must soon have been reassured by a practical experience of the truth of that expression of Holy Writ, "He that hath mercy on the poor lendeth to the Lord" (Prov. xix). There was evidently no reason for the slightest fear. The offerings of the faithful marvellously increased, though the years of St. Lewis's office were years of public scarcity, for so numerous were the gifts offered for Masses that all the friars were engaged in discharging the obligations. But very frequently God assisted His servant, whose whole trust was in Him, by more direct and wonderful ways than by moving the hearts of good christians to help him. St. Lewis acknowledged to Father Vincent Vera that he really often could not himself understand where the sums of money came from which he found in his cell. The follow-

ing incident is a very remarkable example of this. One morning Vincent Garriga, a bookseller, with whom St. Lewis had often dealt, called upon him at St. Onuphrius'. On several occasions he had allowed the Saint to purchase books for the library on credit, payment never failing when he applied. As he entered the room St. Lewis exclaimed, "For the love of God excuse me, my friend, for I have forgotten to provide the money I owe you for the books." Garriga assured him that he had not come for the money, but simply to pay him a visit. "Sit down then, my friend, and let us talk a little. In the meantime God will provide." While they were conversing St. Lewis took from a table near the exact sum which he owed for the books, saying simply as he gave it, "Here is your money, my friend. Take what is yours." Garriga was astounded, for he felt perfectly certain that just before there had been no money whatever on the table. Part of this miraculous money he gave to an intimate friend as a sacred treasure, the rest he preserved himself as a relic. Many would be glad to be thus able to pay their debts, but few are willing to pay the same price as St. Lewis for this assistance.

Whence came this money? The following anecdote may throw light upon the mystery. A certain learned Doctor, holding high office as Royal Councillor, once entered the cell of the Saint, who, looking intently at him, exclaimed, "Be firm, be firm!" "In what, Father, do you mean?" "In that matter," replied the Saint, mentioning the particular thing, "in which you have been to-day engaged." Now this was a strictly private business, so that the astonished Doctor cried out, "Holy God! who told you about that?" The Saint replied by pointing to his crucifix.\* From the same source came the

\* Father Antist tells us that this crucifix came afterwards into the possession of John Buillo, from whom he heard the above account.

money for the bookseller and for the Saint's abundant alms.

Before St. Lewis was able to build the oven for the convent use, it was necessary to have all the bread baked in the little town of Museros. One day the bell for dinner not ringing at the usual time, St. Lewis ordered the Subprior, Father Joseph Gacet, to have it sounded at once, as the appointed time was already past. Father Joseph directed the Brother in charge of the refectory to ring the bell; but he replied, "The bread has not arrived from Museros. The man who should bring it is detained by the rain, our whole stock is exhausted, and there is no bread in the house."

The Subprior going himself to examine, found only seven broken morsels of bread, and explained to the Prior the reason of the delay. There was a heavy storm with a deluge of rain, but as soon as the weather cleared, the bread would doubtless arrive. "Ring the bell," replied Lewis, "the community have already waited long enough." "But, Father Prior, remember there is no bread." "I have already told you, and I repeat it, to ring the refectory bell." The Subprior still hesitated to obey, saying, "What can the Fathers eat?" "Do as I command," returned the Saint, "bread will not be wanting. He who fed the children of Israel in the desert can provide for us." The bell sounded, the community collected, the grace was chanted, the holy Prior raising his heart in humble confidence to God. More than thirty religious were present, and the seven broken crusts were divided into morsels and placed before them. "And they all did eat and had their fill." Enough remained for those who came to the second table.\* We can imagine the silent recollection of that

\* Though all the Saint's biographers mention this miracle, there is some discrepancy in the details. F. Antist says there were ten very small loaves and a few pieces, whereas at least sixty loaves of similar size were necessary. Roca agrees with this account. On the other

supernatural meal, and the devotion and spiritual joy which must have filled the hearts of all who ate of that miraculous bread. On a sudden they had become actors in a scene like that which they had often meditated upon, when Christ fed the multitude in the desert, and the refectory of St. Sabina with the ancient Fathers, presided over by St. Dominic himself, while angels distributed the bread from heaven, must have been vividly represented to their minds.

The solicitude of the holy Prior for the temporal interests of his convent and community was, however, only a sign of his far more tender care of the spiritual perfection of those under his charge. If he was careful to leave the convent to his successor in office free of debt and with ample provision, he was still more anxious to have guarded it from all abuses which might impede the perfection of his subjects. In this as in the less important branch of his official duties, he was frequently greatly assisted by the supernatural gifts and lights with which he was so abundantly favoured. The undisciplined religious, if he numbered any among his subjects, must indeed have rather dreaded a Superior who seemed to know everything that they did, to be able, in fact, to read their secret thoughts; who

hand, the MS. report of the auditors of the Rota, the Bull of Canonisation, and Avignon assert that only seven broken crusts were forthcoming, the version which I have followed. The report of the auditors of the Rota says, "This miracle, a great sign of true sanctity, is attested by two witnesses who were present and ate the bread thus miraculously multiplied, and by three others who had heard it accurately described. That no more bread than the seven pieces were placed before the brethren, that no more bread was carried into the refectory, and that usually sixty loaves were hardly sufficient, the two first witnesses who were present in the refectory testify. And although they belong to the same Order of St. Dominic (as the Saint belonged to, that is), that does not destroy the value of their testimony.

Antist further adds, "It pleased Divine Providence that the Subprior did not advert to the miracle till after the grace, when he saw the bread being brought from the bakehouse."

although meek, kind, and gentle, could be severe in reproving as well as in punishing irregularity.

A religious, who was clothed in the convent of St. Onuphrius, related his own experience of St. Lewis as a Superior to Father Antist. "At the time of my profession," he said, "I made a general confession to Father Lewis. Coming to a certain sin I had committed in my past life, I hesitated through shame. The good Father exclaimed, 'Would you act the part of Judas by not accusing yourself of this sin?' He then mentioned the exact sin of which I had been guilty. I felt after this almost afraid to appear in his presence, for he evidently knew all the faults I had committed when quite alone. Often he would remind me of them. For instance, after I had once written a letter without permission, quite secretly in my cell, Father Prior said to me, 'You have written a letter.' On another occasion he discovered to me a completely hidden fault I had fallen into, and when I expressed my amazement, he said, 'Do not disturb yourself, I have only mentioned this that you may confess it to me who already know it.'"

Another religious experienced the same power of supernatural penetration in his venerable Superior. This Father obtained permission from the Saint to go to Valencia. Now in reality he had been tempted by the devil who, in order to unsettle him in his vocation, had suggested to him that he could serve God better as a Carthusian than by persevering in his own Order. Feeling ashamed to ask St. Lewis to allow him to visit the Carthusian monastery of Portacœli, lest the Saint might conjecture his intention, he endeavoured to obtain his end by deceit. His desire to go to Valencia was a pretence. On his return he begged the ordinary blessing, but St. Lewis said solemnly, "What have you been doing among the Carthusians of Portacœli?" The deluded man was not ashamed, in spite of his religious character, to add an open lie to his former deceit. "I



have not seen the Carthusians," he replied. "Take heed to your words, Father," said his Superior sternly; "you have spent the three past days with the monks of Portaceli, you have been present at their night office, you even petitioned for the habit of their Order. Be assured the Carthusian Father was right when he warned you that this idea of entering their Order was a dangerous temptation of the devil." We can imagine the astonishment and confusion of the Father as he prostrated himself before his Superior, but we are not told what penance St. Lewis inflicted for his disobedience and deceit. The petition for the Carthusian habit had been made in the most secret possible manner.

On another occasion two lay brothers of St. Onuphrius' had been sent out to collect for the house. Their success being greater than usual, they agreed to conceal some of the money, not for their own advantage, but in order to bring the next week's collection easily up to the average amount, thus saving themselves trouble. When they presented themselves before the Prior, to deliver over the collection—"This is not all," he said, "I want also the coin that you have hidden in your left shoe, and,"—turning to the other, "the money that you have put up your sleeve." Their dangerous artifice being thus discovered, the brothers stood abashed. "Our Prior is half blind," they said, after leaving his presence, "he is almost deaf, lives secluded in his cell, yet he knows everything!"

A point of discipline upon which St. Lewis was particularly strict, was concerning the seclusion of his Religious from the world. He was always anxious that they should labour for souls, but he set himself like a wall of brass against all worldly and idle intercourse with secular people. When this evil creeps into a community it becomes the bane of religious life, and the destruction of religious spirit. Religious who seek their recreation outside their convent and the society of their brethren, soon imbibe

a worldly spirit, remaining religious only in name. "One day," writes Father Antist, "when I was walking with Father Lewis outside the convent of St. Onuphrius, he was instructing me how much more fond religious should be of the silent seclusion of their own cells than of conversations with persons living in the world, and he then related, how on one occasion an impudent woman had dared to speak rudely even to him. And if, he added, such a thing could happen to me, a poor, miserable, deaf, blind, decrepit man, old and broken in health as I am, what dangers must await younger men who are not cautious. During the whole period of his priorship, greatly did he rejoice when his religious went seldom abroad, nor would he permit them to go except on public occasions, for preaching, holding discussions in the schools, visiting the houses of Friars, and such like common things, unless in particular cases in which charity demanded some relaxation of this rule."

His own practice perfectly agreed with this doctrine. His cell was his Paradise. There he found a never-failing Friend whose society was his one delight. During his period of office he managed, though at the cost of painful self-sacrifice, to unite continual labour for souls with strict residence in his beloved convent. Although suffering intensely from the ulcer in his left leg which tormented him in the Indies, he hurried home to the convent after preaching in the neighbourhood, and if it were impossible to reach St. Onuphrius' on foot, he would borrow a mule, rather than remain absent till the following day.

Other instances are recorded of the supernatural light with which God so abundantly favoured His faithful servant. As a Religious, named Andrew Cabrerizo, was leaving his cell for the choir, the Saint whispered to him to be careful to expel from his mind certain thoughts he had been entertaining. He mentioned to the astonished Brother their

exact nature, explaining at the same time how they were to be fought against and rejected. After choir the same Brother found the Prior conversing with another religious who was reciting some office near the refectory door; shortly afterwards this religious told Cabrerizo, with a look of astonishment on his face, that St. Lewis had warned him to correct certain failings, most secret in their nature, and to devote himself with the utmost generosity to God's service, without being deterred by mere human fear.

These wonderful gifts must have produced a certain awe in the minds of the religious. Indeed, if such powers could be exercised by an ordinary man, it would be intolerable to feel that thoughts the most secret were read by him as the open page of a book. But being a Divine gift in the hands of a Saint, employed only with all meekness, humility, and charity, for the benefit of souls, it must have produced immense confidence in the minds of all well-disposed religious towards their venerable Superior. Nothing seemed hidden from him. A religious of another convent one day, on a visit to St. Onuphrius', presented himself, according to custom, to obtain the Prior's blessing. As he gave the blessing, St. Lewis, to the surprise of the religious around him, said to the stranger, "The arms and shield that become a religious is his rosary." They afterwards asked the guest whether he understood the Saint's words. He replied, that concealed beneath his habit he was carrying a large hunting knife, and to this the Prior must have alluded, though it was impossible he could have seen it.

During profound silence one evening, at which time the convent gate was always carefully locked, the Prior directed the porter to stand in readiness to receive a Father who was coming from Valencia. "He is in great alarm and agitation," said the Saint, "for three men accosted him on the road and pretended to be robbers in order to

frighten the poor Father, so admit him immediately when he arrives." Shortly after, the Father reached the convent door, evidently much excited, and finding the brother porter standing with the door open, he asked whom they expected at that late hour. His amazement exceeded all bounds when the porter told him that the Prior had witnessed his adventure with the three men he had met on the road.

But although the community had the first claim upon the Saint, the zeal that had carried him to the New World could not be confined to such narrow limits. He preached in all the neighbouring towns and villages; it is hardly necessary to add, with the greatest possible success. Who could resist his burning words united to such an example? The very sight of his emaciated countenance with its humble recollected expression called men to penance. His very presence before he opened his mouth was an effectual sermon. As already noticed, in spite of his lameness, he went continually on foot; but as the Fathers had often remonstrated with him for not using a horse, considering the infirmity under which he laboured, he sometimes started on one, but dismounted after a short distance and walked the remainder of the journey, praying as he went, remounting again as he approached the convent on his return. On Good Friday of the last year of his priorship, going to Moncada where he was preaching the Lent, he not only dismounted when out of sight, but walked barefoot the whole distance.

On Christmas Day he was engaged to preach in the little town of Lyria on the river Duria. This place being too far to reach on the morning of the sermon, he was obliged to spend the night in the parish priest's house. After the household had retired, the Saint was meditating on the mystery of Christ's birth, and unable on such a night to use a bed when His Creator was laid in a manger, he found his way to the stable, where kneeling on the straw

he passed the whole night in contemplation. What must have been the sermon thus prepared !

As already mentioned, during the last year of his office at St. Onuphrius', 1572, he preached the Lent at Moncada, and he undertook the same laborious exercise of charity during the two following years. This was an important place, for many of the higher families of Valencia having country villas in that neighbourhood, they profited from the Saint's apostolic preaching no less than the poorer inhabitants. The example of his humility, penance, and love of prayer left a deep impression on the people, especially on those who by having the honour of receiving him in their houses, became the privileged witnesses of his private and daily life. After the sermon, if he was not needed in the confessional, he was accustomed to retire to his room or to some oratory in order to spend the time till dinner in silent prayer. His abstinence was rigid. He would take nothing but the commonest food, and once resolutely refused to touch some red mullet that was provided, saying that it would little become him to eat such delicacies when he had come there to preach penance and mortification to others.

His chief food on these occasions consisted of vegetables. After the midday meal he devoted himself to acts of charity, visiting the sick, consoling those who came to him in affliction, hearing confessions, and if possible he returned in the evening to his convent.

The same gifts which enabled him to govern his community with supernatural prudence and wisdom, were granted him also for guiding and consoling his penitents. A lady, in course of her confession, said, "Father, I have forgotten something." "You have," answered the Saint, "this is the sin," mentioning the exact circumstance.

The same lady, whilst driving to Museros from Valencia, committed some fault of thought, either some internal

impatience or rash judgment, but afterwards in the confessional, though conscious there was something on her mind, she could not recall what it was. She asked her confessor's help. "Was it not," he replied, "that fault you fell into in the carriage to-day?" mentioning at the same time the exact circumstance. He was correct, much to the lady's astonishment. His spiritual discernment rendered her conscience more visible to him than it was to herself.

Another lady who went to confession to him, rashly allowed herself to become entangled in a dangerous temptation, and the Saint passed the whole night watching in prayer that she might be preserved from actual fall into sin: he was successful. The next morning he sought her out, explained the grievous danger she had run into, exclaiming, "O wayward child! what trouble I have had this past night to prevent you throwing yourself down over the precipice, at the edge of which you were standing!" Another woman who had fallen into grievous crimes, experienced the tender charity and persevering zeal of the Saint. Frequently had he admonished her to repent, but all his exhortations had been in vain; she remained bound in the chains of evil customs. It came to pass that once when she was alone at night an extraordinary brilliancy illuminated her chamber, and in a few moments she clearly saw the holy Father surrounded by this luminous cloud, holding up his finger as if to threaten her with the punishment that would follow her crimes unless she repented. This wonderful apparition had the desired effect; her life was from that moment reformed.

In the year 1572, while still Prior of St. Onuphrius', the Saint's assistance was earnestly sought by a lady who had confidence in his prayers. Her husband was a nobleman employed in some of the most important offices in the kingdom of Valencia, and circumstances of great difficulty having arisen, his position became most precarious, fears

being entertained by his friends for his property and even for his life. In the distress arising from these apprehensions, which haunted her day and night, the poor lady bethought herself of the holy Prior of St. Onuphrius', in whom she was more certain of meeting a friend than among the grandees of the court. But what could the poor friar do for the protection of a public man? What influence could he employ? Sympathy and consolation he could certainly give, therefore the lady presented herself at the convent. "There is no reason for all this grief," was her greeting. "No reason!" she rejoined, "not when I see the most terrible misfortunes on the point of overwhelming my poor husband?" "Fear not," replied the Saint confidently, "these clouds will be dispersed; not only will your husband be safe, but his future will be honourable." Six months elapsed, but still the same trials continued. The patience of the lady being exhausted, she applied again to St. Lewis in all her former affliction. "The time for his deliverance is not yet arrived," was the answer. "But how long must we wait in this suspense?" asked the poor lady. "Three years more, Señora," said the Saint, "but before the completion of the fourth, all your husband's difficulties will be removed." Contrary to all expectation this prediction was exactly fulfilled.

A Carmelite nun, belonging to the Convent of the Incarnation, had considerably before these events seen in a vision this grandee in great danger of drowning, but rescued by a friar in the habit of St. Dominic, whom she understood to be St. Lewis, and also by a Jesuit Father. She saw St. Lewis continually forming crosses over the drowning man, and by these sacred signs rescuing him from the imminent danger of his life. No doubt the delivery of the nobleman from his troubles was due to the prayers of the Saint.

On the Festival of the Ascension of our Blessed Lord, in the year 1573, the last year of his priorship, he preached in

the Church of St. Michael in the city of Valencia. Among the congregation was a certain medical doctor, who declared that during the sermon not only did the face of the Saint shine with celestial radiance, but that his very habit seemed also transfigured, while his whole body was elevated into the air from the pulpit in which he was standing.

In October 1573, the three years of his priorship having expired, he prepared to return at once to his own convent in Valencia. The last three years had been indeed a season of special benediction, spiritual no less than temporal, to the convent of St. Onuphrius. In this short period the building had been completed, all necessary repairs effected, vineyards had been planted, the church amply furnished, and instead of debt there was a considerable sum to provide for the expenses of the community. Regular discipline had been perfected, the offices of the church more solemnly ordered, work for souls, preaching and confessions more zealously undertaken, all religious obligations more exactly discharged. The happiness of the community was only overshadowed by one thing, that the Prior's term of office had so quickly ended. Their regret when they knelt to receive his parting blessing can easily be imagined; but as the rule forbids the re-election of a Prior, unless by dispensation from Rome, without an interval of six years, St. Lewis affectionately bade them farewell, asked pardon for his shortcomings, and returned to Valencia.

The Convent of St. Onuphrius has been destroyed by the vandalism of revolution. Nothing of it now remains except four ruined walls of the cloister, beside which stands a country house built out of the remains of the old convent.





MONASTERY OF PORTACÆLI.

## CHAPTER II.

### AGAIN NOVICE MASTER.

*October 1573 to May 1575.*

Love of solitude—Lewis and the Carthusians—The Monastery of Portacœli—Reasons for remaining Dominican—Reappointed Novice Master—The Evil One visible—Spiritual Insight—Conversion of a Prelate—An astonished Professor—Wonderful Conversion—Reading Thoughts—Preaches Lent at Borriano—Manner of Life in a Secular House—Assists a dying Peasant—Denunciation and Conversion—Baffled Spies—Sufferings of Father Bartholomew—Death of Father Fernandez—Fear of Corsairs—Devil as an Angel of Light.

"Fear and trembling are come upon me . . . And I said, Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly, and be at rest? Lo, I have gone far off flying away; and I abode in the wilderness."—PSALM liv. 6-8.



NCE relieved of his office, the only desire of the Saint was to retire into his cell to dwell there in solitude with God alone. Conversation with men was to him a penance far more trying than the rigorous

fasts with which he afflicted his body, yet it was a mortification he gladly embraced for the love of souls. Nothing is more trying, whether for the student or for one devoted to contemplation, than to be constantly at the disposal of others, liable to be interrupted at all hours for the convenience of those who may desire assistance. In the lives of the Saints we are familiar with this holy contest between their love of solitude and their zeal for souls. St. Lewis may be described emphatically as a lover of the solitude of his cell. He fully realised the teaching of Blessed Albert the Great, that a religious seldom returns to his cell after conversation without some injury to his spirit, or, as Seneca expressed it, "less a man." Prayer was his delight. If to be interrupted in some favourite study, even by necessary duties, is a trial to the patience, we can imagine the feelings of a Saint who, while tasting the delights of intimate union with God, is called to console some one suffering under the ordinary trials of life, or perplexed by some mere worldly difficulty. This happened daily to St. Lewis. He was the refuge of all who suffered. The sick desired a visit from the holy Religious whose blessing had so often cured; the tempted had recourse to him for advice; those in sorrow came for consolation. Often, no doubt, he was visited merely on account of the fame of his wisdom, sanctity, and miraculous powers. Every one wished to speak to the Saint. He spent hours in the confessional, being always ready to enter the sacred tribunal, and he visited the sick, whether rich or poor, with equal charity. Often he was consulted about questions of great moment requiring much thought and attention.

To one so retiring and silent this was a grievous trial. His desire for solitude, which increased as he grew older, can be measured by the fact that even after dinner, the season of recreation in religious houses, it was seldom that the Saint joined in conversation. Moreover, his humility

was offended by the number of persons of all classes who sought his counsel and assistance.

So deeply did he feel the trial of these external distractions, that he had an inclination to hide himself in the solitude of the Carthusian monastery of the Portaccio, of which his father had been formerly lay procurator. His father, it will be remembered, had entertained the same desire, and was actually on his way thither to demand the habit when he was admonished by a vision that this was not God's providence for him.

This Carthusian monastery, often mentioned in the course of St. Lewis's life, possessed attractions of the natural as well as the supernatural order for those who desired to live in solitude. It was situated in a lovely spot, on the declivity of a hill from which there was a magnificent view, about four leagues from Valencia. Laborde, in his "*Voyage pittoresque en Espagne*," describes it with enthusiasm. The wild and arid country, he tells us, traversed before arriving at it, renders the surprise greater at its beauty. The Charreuse is built on a hill overlooking the valley formerly called Lallen, which seems to have been the bed of a torrent. Mountains covered with pines and cork trees surround it, while at their foot flowering shrubs grow among the clumps of carob trees which border the cultivated possessions of the monastery. Within the peaceful enclosure everything seems to breathe tranquillity, repose, and religious seclusion. At the same time, on all sides there is evidence of the untiring industry of the solitaries who have neglected nothing offered them by the resources of the place. Besides grain with which their barns are full, they possess a vineyard which produces the famous wine "*de la Cartuxa*," one of the finest in Spain. A quarry of black marble, susceptible of good polish, is worked by the monks. The interior of the monastery corresponds to the promise of the outside. The buildings, though simple, are solid and elegant, the

cells neat, the gardens well kept, with roses and other flowers. The graves where the monks are laid to rest, after their life of labour and penance is ended, have a beauty of their own, shaded with palm trees and wild laurels. All ideas of mournfulness disappear when we are greeted by the perfume of the roses and jasmines that flourish in this lovely spot. Looking at the solid construction of the monastic buildings, and the fertile fields surrounding them, we cannot but recall the benefits the monks did for the country. Marshes drained, woods cleared, torrents confined within banks, waste land reclaimed, these were the common effects, the first-fruits coming after they had settled in a district. The community never died, so that improvements went on steadily and perseveringly.

In gratitude for these benefits the monks in our century were expelled from their ancient home which they had transformed from a desert into a paradise. The monastery was destroyed, only a small part is still standing. The magnificent church, rich in superb marbles, is happily well preserved, and the holy Sacrifice is celebrated there nearly all the year through. Some day, we must hope, a new monastery will arise, and the solemn Carthusian chant will again be heard at Portacœli.

This was the monastery of which John Bertrand had been sometime procurator, and into which both he and St. Lewis desired to enter. The natural beauties doubtless formed no attraction to St. Lewis, whose conversation was in heaven, but the silence, the tranquil seclusion cutting him off from all communication with men, did certainly charm him. Then his humility was pleased with the idea of becoming once more a novice to be instructed in religious life. It may appear strange to some that a professed Dominican should think of entering another Order, but the Holy See allows members of any Order to pass to the eremitical life of the Carthusian cloister. The celebrated

Carthusian writer, Ludolph of Saxony, author of the *Life of Jesus Christ*, published as the first volume of the *Bollandist Lives*, was a Dominican for thirty years.

But this was not God's will for St. Lewis. He was enriched with special graces for active apostolic work which it did not please God to allow him to relinquish.

Two considerations decided the Saint to persevere in the Dominican Order. The first was that burning thirst for the salvation of souls which had been rather increased than satiated by the labours and sufferings of the South American mission, the second was the loving veneration he felt towards St. Dominic and the other Saints of the Order, but particularly St. Vincent Ferrer, to whom his devotion was intense. When obliged to abandon the delightful intercourse with God that he experienced in his cell, to devote himself to active work, he encouraged himself by remembering how St. Vincent and St. Dominic had suffered the same trial without flying from the cross; without then daring to compare himself with those servants of God, he felt that he, like them, must be resigned to leave God for God's sake, or rather to seek God, when such was His will, in the souls of his neighbours.

Blessed Nicolas Factor deserves the grateful thanks of all Dominicans for using his powerful influence in this matter. He knew the thoughts that were agitating the soul of his dear friend, Father Lewis, and he could thoroughly sympathise with his intense desire to fly away to the desert to dwell with God alone. He himself did actually leave his own branch of the Order of St. Francis, the Recollects, and joined the Capuchins, though he afterwards returned again to his own convent of Valencia. But he opposed most warmly the idea Lewis had begun to entertain of taking refuge from the harassing yet fruitful duties of the active life in the solemn and attractive calm of the Carthusian cloister. He wrote a letter to his friend, discussing the

whole question, with strong reasons against the contemplated change, and as St. Lewis had the highest veneration for his sanctity, and knew the extraordinary lights with which he was favoured by God, his advice so clearly expressed had very considerable effect in calming his mind.

Shortly after his return to Valencia from St. Onuphrius', the novitiate was once more confided to his care.

The Prior, Father Onuphrius Clement, a man much esteemed in Valencia for learning as well as for holiness of life, entertained, in common with all the Fathers, feelings of the deepest reverence for St. Lewis. He therefore rejoiced exceedingly to place the young religious in the skilful hands of so holy a master. It is needless to say how much the novitiate advanced under the Saint's care, as a fertile garden in the hands of a thoroughly experienced and industrious workman. He taught the young religious more by his life than his words to bear the yoke of their Master's service joyfully, to make it truly sweet and light by being exact in the least duties for the love of God. The novices began to advance quickly in every religious virtue to the edification of the whole convent. Like every genuine work of God this roused the fury of the evil one, who saw with rage that Saints were being formed to go forth into the world as champions against sin to defeat his designs of darkness. He did not confine his efforts to the ordinary temptations with which he assails all religious, but St. Lewis often saw him under visible shapes endeavouring to spoil the fruit of his labours. One day a brother complained to the Father Master that he had experienced certain things that he thought must have been caused by some preternatural agency; St. Lewis replied, "You must know, my son, that a demon prowls about through this house trying to disturb you, but fear not. Ever since I have been novice master I have often seen him under the form of a dark and hideous man, who, though laden with chains, is still very

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active." Thus he brought practically before the novices how necessary it was to "cast all their care on God who had care of them, to be sober and watch, because their adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, was going about seeking whom he might devour."\* The words chanted every evening at Compline became thus a living reality.

Many instances are recorded at this time of the marvellous gifts of spiritual discernment he had received from God. The souls of others seemed as visible to him as their faces, and he employed his supernatural knowledge for their spiritual advancement. A Dominican Father named Father Michael Ferrer had for a long time earnestly desired to see the man of whose holiness he had heard so many reports, so that on the first opportunity he came to Valencia from Calatayud, a town of Aragon. St. Lewis having received him with all his usual sweetness, in order to converse with him more freely and quietly on spiritual matters, walked with him in the retired garden belonging to the novitiate. Father Michael was delighted with the Saint's discourse, but he received, before leaving the garden, a more signal proof of the union of his soul with God. The holy Father was accustomed to make the sign of the cross on the forehead of those with whom he had conversed, and while forming the sacred sign on Father Michael's brow, he said, "Father, remember when you go to confession to accuse yourself of this sin (mentioning the thing) which you have forgotten to confess." Father Michael was overwhelmed with astonishment, for that sin had been committed four years before he had entered religion. It was quite true, as he then recollected, that he had forgotten to accuse himself of it in his confessions. This incident rests on the highest authority, for not only is it mentioned by all the Saint's biographers, but Father Antist declares that he heard

\* 1 Peter v. 8.

it from Father Michael himself, not long before the death of that religious.

No wonder when these facts became known that some persons, conscious of secret defects, were almost afraid to enter the Saint's presence, till they had cleansed their souls by repentance. Father Francis Clement acknowledged that this was the case with him, for he had sometimes avoided speaking to St. Lewis when he had committed a fault but had not yet confessed it. Blessed Nicolas Factor declared that he always went to confession before visiting the Saint, in order to meet his eye with an unblemished conscience. A prelate of the diocese related to the Archbishop of Valencia that a certain ecclesiastic went one day to visit the Saint, and entering the convent knocked at his cell door; St. Lewis opened the door, but after looking intently at his visitor for a moment, slammed the door in his face. The mortification of this rebuff was hardly greater than the astonishment he felt that the meek religious generally so courteous and affable should treat him so rudely. While thinking it over, he suddenly remembered a secret sin of which he had not repented, and at the same time the malice of this sin became distinct before his eyes. Contrition filled his heart. Was not the treatment of the servant of God a sign of what he must expect from the Divine Majesty Himself, if he did not repent? He was thoroughly converted, and on going to visit the Saint he was received with all possible sweetness and charity.

In the year of the Jubilee, called the Holy Year, a learned professor visited St. Lewis. To the ordinary civilities the Saint answered nothing, but gazing fixedly at his astonished visitor, he said, "Take heed not to relax, for you are now in a good state." Not long before, the professor had devoutly fulfilled the conditions of the Indulgence.

Again, we read that a lady of station in Valencia was converted by the same supernatural illumination combined



with the heroic charity of the Saint. It was his common custom when he heard that others had committed sin, to lament over their fall with sighs and tears, often inflicting upon himself the penance that they deserved. In this case the lady in question, being of good family, was highly respected in the city, but it was revealed to the Saint that she had secretly formed a criminal attachment to a gentleman who visited at her house. St. Lewis was grieved to the heart, and while praying with burning tears for the sinner's conversion, he scourged himself with such extreme severity that the blood flowed from his lacerated shoulders. In the evening, calling suddenly at the house, he found the gentleman already there. The lady of the house was mightily astonished when St. Lewis was ushered into the room, but her amazement was greater still when he declared that his business was of a most private nature, and he must request her visitor to withdraw. When left alone, the Saint began to weep bitterly, his tears preventing him being able to explain for some time the cause of his grievous distress. At last with a voice interrupted with sobs he exclaimed, "You yourself are the cause of my grief. The sins you have committed with the man who has just gone distress me. There, pointing with his finger, in that spot you committed such and so many sins. See, madam, how much your sins have cost me." He then slightly uncovered his shoulders, and they appeared torn and lacerated, and still covered with blood. The sinner was touched to the heart; she felt the most violent and almost inconsolable grief, so that the Saint was obliged, to encourage her, to promise her the merciful pardon of God, and that by His help she would be enabled to repent. He then added, "You must be careful to have those fifteen Masses said in honour of the mysteries of the rosary." The lady was now more than ever convinced that this was a divine communication and not the result of any human knowledge, for her unfulfilled

vow to have the Masses said that she might obtain grace to reform her life, was simply a mental act revealed to no one. Her soul was won, she repented and changed her life.

While Prior of St. Onuphrius', as before related, the Saint had often revealed his secret thoughts to a religious named Andrew Cabrerizo; now at Valencia this Father again experienced the same spiritual help. After finishing his accusation in confession, the Saint said with some little severity, "Do you understand what confession is? Tell me why you have not accused yourself of the bad advice you gave your brother, when you persuaded him not to enter religion, but to become a notary in order to help your father." Andrew, overcome with astonishment, admitted that he had given his brother this advice, but most secretly. His brother had mentioned the fact to no one; St. Lewis he had never even seen; and Andrew was more than ever convinced of the supernatural light which enabled the Saint to read the secrets of men's hearts. A penitent of the holy Father, named Violenta Juncar, said to him once, "I hardly like to confess to your Reverence, for before I have begun you know all my sins and shortcomings." "Hush, my child," replied the Saint; "what makes you imagine such a thing as that!"

During the Lent of this year, 1574, the Saint preached at Borriano, a considerable town about seven Spanish miles from Valencia. The word of life from his lips produced the usual fruit in the souls of his hearers. He lodged with a magistrate of the town, Andrew Androner, and edified the whole household by the penance of his life, his love of solitude, his assiduous prayer, and his entire detachment from all earthly things. His food was as coarse as it was scanty. Far from seeking or tolerating delicacies, he would eat nothing but herbs and vegetables, in spite of the fatiguing labours he underwent in the church. When not preaching

or hearing confessions, he sought the solitude of his own room and remained there in silence, only joining the family circle at dinner, but then only for a short time. It was noticed that during his stay he only once was seen to look out of the window. He never left the house except in the morning to go to the church to offer the holy Sacrifice and to preach, but he visited nowhere in the town except at the hospitals and prisons.

He readily consented, however, to visit a poor labourer named James Roca, who, by a fall from an olive tree, was so grievously hurt that he was entirely senseless and even considered to be dead. He had been carried to his father's house ; the parish priest had been immediately called, but he could not obtain the slightest sign of consciousness. In their distress the family thought of the holy preacher, and begged him for the love of God to come to their assistance. At the first word the Saint spoke the injured man recovered the use of speech, made his confession, and received holy Viaticum. At the end of the sacred rites he again relapsed into unconsciousness, and shortly afterwards died. St. Lewis having thus prepared him for eternity, bid the afflicted parents to be of good cheer, for their son was certainly on the way to everlasting life.

Obstinate sinners dreaded the Saint's preaching, fearing that if they would not be converted, he might publicly reprehend them for giving such grievous scandal. His fearless zeal was well known, while threats of violence only added to its vehemence by the desire he always felt to die for God. An instance of this is related which may be introduced here, though it is not stated that the event occurred at Borriano. Two gentlemen were giving public scandal by living in infamous and notorious concubinage. St. Lewis, seeking them out, spoke to them privately with zeal and earnestness, tempered with sweetness. He endeavoured in every possible way to convince them of the

horrible nature of their sin, and to bring them to repentance. All was in vain. He then preached in public, but in general terms, against the crime of concubinage. But this was of no effect. Lastly, finding everything else fail, he determined to denounce these hardened and scandalous sinners. As he ascended the pulpit a heavenly fire seemed to fill his heart and the burning words with which he was to denounce the scandal and to vindicate the divine honour were clearly suggested to his mind. With apostolic freedom, utterly disregarding all human fear, he held up the sinners, who were present before him, to public reprobation, so clearly and strongly that many, knowing their evil dispositions, dreaded the consequences of their revenge. This fear was not groundless. So intensely were they exasperated by the Saint's reproof, that one immediately rushed forward to cast the holy man headlong from the pulpit. But there was no necessity for the faithful to defend him. God was his shield and his buckler. The enraged sinner was stopped in his headlong course by the sight of flames of heavenly fire surrounding and defending the Saint, and abandoning in fear his purpose of revenge, the miserable man turned towards the door and rushed madly out of the church. On reaching his home he related all that had happened to the wretched partner of his guilt, thinking to excite in her a like rage; but she, struck with the fear of God, hastened to the Saint, fell at his feet, and begged his prayers with many expressions of sorrow. The holy man received her with fatherly tenderness, and after words of encouragement sent her to her mother's house.

The other man had not felt the denunciation of the Saint less keenly than his companion, though he exercised at the time more self-restraint. He determined, however, to take the preacher's life. An opportunity soon presented itself. As he was riding past the church, he caught sight of the Saint alone, standing near the door. Lewis saw his inten-

tion in his enraged countenance, but although there was time to retire into the church, his desire to offer his life in sacrifice to God would not allow him to retreat, but smiling kindly on his enemy he asked if he could do him any service. Suddenly the man's heart was touched; instead of aiming a fatal blow at the Saint he dismounted, knelt at his feet, begging pardon in humble terms for his scandalous life, as well as for the hideous purpose of revenge that he had cherished in his heart.

So well known was the apostolic courage of the servant of God, that once when he was preaching in a country church a great man of the neighbourhood, whose conscience must have been very uneasy, feared lest his vices might be denounced in public, and not daring to go himself to the church, he hired three spies, binding them separately by oath, to relate faithfully to him anything that the preacher might say which appeared as if intended for his benefit. On the way to the church these three spies met, and none of them liking the commission, they divulged to each other that they had all three been hired for the same purpose. They entered the church, the sermon began, and to the amazement of the spies the Saint said, "The Pharisees were content to hire one Judas to betray Christ; but he who is opposed to me has sent three to entrap me." They returned with nothing but this account of the marvellous supernatural knowledge of the Saint.

On the octave day of the Feast of our Blessed Lord's Ascension a religious named Father Bartholomew of Pavia was on his deathbed in the convent of Valencia. To the natural grief felt by all the friars at losing one of the most virtuous of their body, was added the fact that for the three days before his departure his sufferings were acute and agonising beyond description. Nothing relieved the intense pain; all the poor sufferer could do was to cry out continually, "Lord Jesus, receive my soul." These exclamations

proved the intensity of his agony, for he was not inexperienced in suffering, and his patience in a former illness of four years' duration, during which several severe operations had been performed, was so wonderful that his countenance hardly changed, no cry escaped him, and a quiet murmur of the Name of Jesus was the only sign he gave of the pain he endured. While the surgeon's hand was upon him, his mind was with Jesus Christ on the cross. But now in his last illness his agitation was extreme, while his cries were heartrending; so that his religious brethren knew not what to do except to mingle their tears with his. St. Lewis visited the sick man, tried to console him, and read a gospel over him, but his pains were undiminished. The Saint therefore retiring to his cell, betook himself to earnest prayer, and it was revealed to him that God had allowed the devils to inflict these terrible pains on the dying religious, either to purify his soul from the last stains, or to increase the eternal weight of glory which was awaiting him in heaven. Of this reward God would not deprive him, even at the prayer of St. Lewis.

Instances of apparition at the hour of death are not unknown amongst ordinary people, we should therefore expect them more frequently in the lives of Saints, for those recently departed would certainly desire the assistance of their powerful prayers. While St. Lewis was at Valencia, Father Francis Ferrandiz died in the city of Tarragona, where he was residing at the request of Cardinal Gaspar Cervantes, the Archbishop, as theological professor in the schools founded by that illustrious prelate.

Intelligence had been brought to Valencia that Father Ferrandiz was seriously ill, and St. Lewis was specially affected by it, as he had been novice master to the young professor. Father Francis Palan, who was also a lecturer in the University of Tarragona, coming on a visit to Valencia, the Saint inquired after Father Ferrandiz. "I left him

very ill," was the answer. "Ah! Father," replied the Saint, "pray for his soul. He is dead. Last night I saw him lying dead here." Three days afterwards the news of his death reached the convent.

About this time the kingdom of Valencia was thrown into a state of great consternation, at a report which was circulated that the Moors from Algiers were preparing a large armament to sack the city and ravage the surrounding country. A predatory invasion of the Algerine pirates or freebooters was dreaded as one of the most fearful calamities. While the renegade christian, Barbarossa, reigned in Algiers, frequent contests took place, and his name was one of terror to all the Spanish coast. Prescott describes the panic caused by one of these threatened invasions under Barbarossa when fears were entertained that the Morisco population in Spain would rise to aid the infidels. The authorities seem to have been paralysed with terror until the Bishop of Palencia, who happened to be near the coast, advised them to erect fortified towers along the banks of the Ebro, which baffled the attack of Barbarossa. The flat coast of Valencia was naturally inviting to the freebooters, and watchmen were posted in the towers, called *Atalayas*, of moorish origin, along the coast, ready to give the alarm. Nothing alarmed the people more than to hear the dreadful cry, "*Moros, Moros en tierra! Moros, Moros, Arma, Arma!*"

The report therefore that a large fleet of Algerine corsairs was preparing to invade and ravage the country seems to have alarmed every one except St. Lewis. The authorities called the citizens to arms, fortifications were hastily erected, and the higher classes sent their families far inland. Amongst others a lady named Frances Ferrer was ordered by her husband to take refuge from the expected storm with his brother, who had an estate in the kingdom of Aragon. Disconsolate at the thought of leaving her husband to

brave the danger alone, she sought the advice of St. Lewis, her confessor. He had heard the common report, but did not share the general apprehension, being guided by a superior light. "You need not trouble yourself, my child," he replied; "nor need you abandon your home, for I can assure you that the report is without foundation, and that the Moors are not even thinking of attacking the city."

This supernatural illumination both in temporal and spiritual matters was one of the gifts most remarkable in St. Lewis, as we often find in the case of those Saints whose office it has been to guide others. In the difficult task of discerning spirits, and distinguishing the action of the devil transforming himself into an angel of light from all divine operations, he showed the most surprising skill, delivering his opinion with a confidence which proved the clearness of his spiritual vision. A woman who was his penitent considered herself divinely illuminated. Often she saw a youth of majestic appearance shining with wonderful light; from his lips she had heard many marvels concerning the future life. St. Lewis assured her positively that she was being deceived by a devil instead of being, as she fondly imagined, the companion of an angel. She was indignant at this decision and left her confessor in disgust. The vision again appeared, and the radiant figure said, "Know that Father Lewis Bertrand is your enemy, care nothing for his words, but obey me who speak the truth to you. As a proof that my words are true, follow that young man whom you see in the street walking in apparent health and vigour. You will see sudden death overtake him." The event happened, and the woman returned to St. Lewis in triumph, to relate this confirmation of her own view of the vision. The Saint still declared without hesitation that she was the victim of diabolical delusion, and though she would not believe then, she afterwards was obliged to confess that he was right, and to lament her own obstinacy.



## CHAPTER III.


### ST. LEWIS PRIOR AT VALENCIA.

*May 15, 1575.—May 15, 1578.*

Lewis elected Prior—St. Vincent's Image—Scroll on the Prior's Wall—Lewis described by Father Antist—Father Dominic of Monte Mayor and Father Amator d'Espi—Prophetical Vision—Strict, not Stern—Correction—Indolence—Visits—Chapter—Dislikes Titles—Courtesy—Love of Choir—Regular, though Suffering—Paternal Care—Alms—The Provincial Chapter—"No better than my Fathers"—A Penitent Soul—Sudden Death—Desire to Resign.

"Now all chastisement for the present seemeth not to bring with it joy, but sorrow ; but afterwards it will yield, to them that are exercised by it, the most peaceable fruit of justice."—HEBREWS xii. 11.

"He that loveth correction, loveth knowledge ; but he that hateth reproof is foolish."—PROVERBS xii. 1.

N the 15th of May 1575 St. Lewis was elected Prior of the Convent of Valencia, and in spite of the most earnest entreaties he was obliged to accept the office. The Provincial was not moved by any of the arguments which the Saint used, with all the eloquence of intense sincerity, to prove his own unfitness for so weighty a charge ; but considering that his very dread of the responsibility showed that he would sustain it with virtue, confirmed with the utmost pleasure the wise choice of the Fathers. The joy of the community equalled the sorrow and fear of the Saint.

When he found himself actually Prior, unable to escape

the burden he dreaded, he went for consolation into the chapel that had once been the cell of St. Vincent Ferrer. An image of the Saint was there, and before it St. Lewis sank down in the extremity of his grief to implore the assistance of his heavenly patron. Looking with confidence into the face of the image he exclaimed, "O holy Father Vincent, they have made me Prior of this convent, and I am thoroughly unworthy of the charge, and utterly unable rightly to fulfil its duties. I therefore transfer this priorship to thee, and I beg thee, glorious Saint, to deign to be Prior of this house instead of me. I will be thy subprior, and I will govern according to thy commands." He then stooped forward to kiss the feet of the image, but the figure of the Saint, as though it were the living St. Vincent himself, bent down and raised him up, thus preventing him from kissing his feet. During his whole office, St. Vincent helped him in every difficulty, as St. Lewis frequently testified.

But on what evidence, it will be asked, are we to believe this wonderful miracle of the movement of the image? Does it rest on mere rumour? It was related by the Fathers of the house, one to another, and was believed, but no one knew the origin of the report. Unwilling not to have a more definite foundation than mere current report, two of the religious, named Antony and Lewis, determined to ask the Saint before he died concerning the truth of the story. They visited him together during his last illness; began to converse on spiritual matters, and gradually introduced the subject of devotion to St. Vincent Ferrer. They then said that it had been stated that a religious of the convent had received a great favour from the Saint, whose image, it was said, bending forward as if alive, had lifted him from the ground. "Have you ever heard this report, Father? Is it true?" "It is true," answered St. Lewis. The two religious continued their questions, wondering to whom this favour had been granted, and at last, growing

bolder, one of them said, "Perhaps, Father, it was to you yourself this happened? Why do you conceal the goodness of the holy Father St Vincent?" On this Lewis acknowledged that this favour was vouchsafed to him when he was made Prior, adding these characteristic words, "I, like a beast of burden, was obliged to bear the weight of the community; so, like Balaam's ass, I received a supernatural favour. Wonder not that this happened to me, when you remember what happened to the ass."

Many of the Fathers of the community had been novices under the Saint, and all were perfectly aware of the zeal he had always displayed for strict religious discipline, so that the fact of the election shows the earnest religious spirit that prevailed in the house. "God willed to complete the reformation of this convent," writes Father Antist, who was one of the electors, "so He moved the hearts of the Fathers to elect Lewis as their superior." As the superior is elected in the Order of St. Dominic, according to the ancient canonical custom of the Church, by the subjects over whom he is to rule, each elector has a grave responsibility resting upon him, and can prove his love of good discipline by electing the superior who, according to his opinion, will enforce it most prudently and most efficaciously. Thus, according to the intention of the Church, every member of the community is interested in maintaining good discipline and shares the responsibility of the superior. "Therefore," remarks Father Feuillet, "as an irregular or negligent superior is a scourge in God's hands to punish the community who has elected him, so when God gives a Saint for a superior, the choice of the religious who elect him is a visible mark and guarantee of the love and protection of God, since a good superior draws down a thousand blessings from heaven." The convent of Valencia, the mother of many Saints, was never more highly favoured than at this time when one of her most illustrious children became her head.

From the first day of his office he hung on the wall of his cell a scroll on which was written, in large plain letters, those words of the apostle, "*Si hominibus placerem, Christi servus non essem.*" "If I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10). Father Antist testifies from personal experience that not only did this maxim meet the eye of every religious who entered the Prior's cell, but that it was carried out practically in the government of the house, for he says, "In ruling us he cared very little whether he pleased men, but he was very anxious to please God and St. Dominic, and the above quoted text of St. Paul was his guide whenever men desired to gratify their own will, without reference to the will of God."

As Father Antist was a member of the community, his description of the holy Prior will be far more interesting in his own words than with any alteration or addition: "He set us a wonderful example of every religious virtue, always doing more himself than he prescribed to others. With most vigilant care did he watch over the choir duties, the studies, as well as every other religious observance, in order that all might be properly regulated. Only three times during his term of office did he spend the night outside the convent, and then he was employed in preaching. Whenever his health allowed, he was present in choir, also in the refectory at the common table, and even when so ill that he was obliged to dine in the infirmary, he took his place in the refectory to see that all the wants of the community were properly supplied, and that silence was observed. When unable to stand through weakness, he attended the whole divine office in choir, sitting in his stall. Nor was he only present at these duties, but he showed great zeal in correcting any defects, for his opinion was that in religious small failings and venial sins ought to be punished with almost the same severity with which mortal sins would be visited out of religion. When he

had entrusted any office to one of his subjects, for example that of Subprior, Vicar, Master of the Novices, or Zelator,\* he immediately deprived them of it if he detected negligence in the discharge of its duties; he would do this even if they had only held the office a week, for he was accustomed to say that he would far rather be considered changeable than tolerate any negligence in God's service contrary to the requirements of religious perfection. In all this appeared the truth of what a layman of holy life had said some time before St. Lewis was elected Prior, that he had returned from the West Indies in order that by his government of this house as Prior, he might preserve intact that strict observance which its founders had introduced and sealed with their blood."

These holy founders to whom Father Antist frequently alludes, were the venerable Fathers Dominic of Monte Mayor and Amator d'Espi, who were the reformers of the Province to which the convent of Valencia belonged. A few words concerning these two heroic men, abridged from the notice given of them by Marchese,† will not be out of place. Father Dominic took the habit as a youth in the Province of Castile, and after a successful course of studies was employed in preaching with remarkable zeal and fruit in the Province of Biscay. Like a loyal son of St. Dominic he spread the devotion of the rosary among the people, and his confidence in that wonderful prayer was so great that he not only constantly recited his beads but wore them continually round his neck. It is remarkable that in Biscay he was Prior over a Community which had been Franciscan, but by Pontifical authority became Dominican, adopting the habit and rule of St. Dominic.

\* The "Zelator" is an officer appointed by the Prior to go through the houses to see that silence is observed, and that everything else is in order.

† *Diario Domenicano*, July 10.

Father Dominic afterwards distinguished himself greatly by the wisdom, prudence, and zeal with which he governed the celebrated convent of St. Stephen in Salamanca in which there were then more than two hundred religious. The times were hard, and provisions scarce, but under the management of Father Dominic, not only was nothing wanting for the support of the community, but eight hundred poor were sustained for the whole year, partly by the revenues of the house, and partly by alms collected from house to house by the venerable Prior.

From Salamanca Father Dominic was sent by Francis di Ferrara, the Master General of the Order, into the Province of Aragon, with the arduous duty of establishing there a reform of discipline. Amidst the difficulties of this office he was consoled and greatly assisted by the holy Prior of Valencia, Father Amator d'Espi. This distinguished man, who was to share with the Provincial Father Dominic the glory of martyrdom, was a native of the town of Lucente in the kingdom of Valencia, and at an early age entered the Dominican convent of that place. After graduating as Master of Theology in Paris, he held the office of Prior in his own convent in Lucente for fifteen consecutive years. When Father Dominic first entered the province as Visitor, a chapter was held in which he was made Vicar General of the Reformed Congregation of Aragon, but afterwards, by order of Clement VII., the Congregation was united to the Province of Aragon and Father Dominic was instituted Provincial. His first care was to procure the appointment of Father Amator d'Espi as Vicar of the kingdom of Valencia and Prior of the convent of that city.

This is not the place to describe in detail the labours of these two holy men, who by their joint exertions introduced strict observance into the relaxed province. No work could be more arduous, but none more pleasing to God. Their zeal and prudence triumphed over all difficulties, but

God was pleased to demand the sacrifice of their lives as the price of their success. They had been holding a visitation in the convent of St. Catherine and were returning to Valencia, when they were attacked by two armed ruffians who had once belonged to the Order, or rather had worn the habit of the Order of St. Dominic, but had become apostates because they would not submit to the regular discipline introduced by the holy Provincial. Grievously wounded, though not killed by these false brethren, the two martyrs managed to drag themselves back to the monastery from which they had lately departed. Falling prostrate at the church door they fervently offered their lives to God for their own sins, as well as for the conversion of their murderers. The horrified religious discovering their two venerable and beloved superiors in a dying state at the church door, carried them to the infirmary, where, after a few days spent in fervent prayer and earnest desires of eternal life, they both departed together to receive the martyr's crown in the glory of heaven.

They were buried with great solemnity in Valencia, the following inscription being erected in their honour :—"In this tomb are preserved together the venerable bones of the blessed Martyrs of Christ, Friar Dominic of Monte Mayor of an illustrious family in Cordova, the holy reformer, who, by the authority of Pope Clement VII., caused our holy Constitutions to be exactly observed ; and Friar Amator d'Espi, the vigilant Prior of this convent, whose souls were released from the bonds of the body by the swords of wicked men, and most happily took wing to the heavenly country in the year 1534."

The prayer that these blessed martyrs, in imitation of St. Stephen, offered for their persecutors, was heard at least in the case of one of their miserable murderers. He fled from justice, but was captured by the Moors and carried into slavery, where his lot was harder than usual even

among the christian slaves of the infidel. Recognising this as a punishment sent by God's mercy, he repented of his crimes, and bore all hardships with patience in a spirit of penance.

St. Lewis was now the successor of these heroic men. He had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of being educated as a religious in the atmosphere of strict discipline introduced by them; he was now called upon to preserve, continue, and complete their work. In a convent of more than one hundred religious, even though in an excellent state of discipline, there must be many trials for the superior. Human nature is not dead, but being fought against and conquered in the fervent religious, and the devils enlist in multitudes as energetic allies of nature. No wonder then that the superior must bear the cross. St. Lewis shortly after his election saw in a vision three distinct representations of the sacred Face of our Blessed Lord, as impressed on the veil of St. Veronica. "He asked me what I thought they indicated," writes Father Antist; "but immediately answered the question himself, 'they mean the trials and sufferings that await me during my three years of priorship.'"

That St. Lewis was a strict superior cannot be denied; and it is certain that as he required the utmost exactness in every religious duty, and was inflexibly opposed to the slightest manifestation of worldly spirit, the less fervent members of his community must sometimes have chafed under the yoke. But it would be altogether a mistake to imagine him to be merely a rigorous exacter of discipline. It is always difficult to draw one side of a character of so supernatural an order as that of a Saint, without appearing to forget the balancing virtues on the other side. As God Himself is infinite Justice as well as infinite Love and Mercy, yet, when we dwell upon one of these attributes, we seem to ignore the other, so in its measure is it with



the Saints of God. Their zeal against sin and for God's glory is apt to look like harshness if we forget the paternal sweetness, the true charity, with which it is always tempered. In St. Lewis there was no trace of bitter or pharisaical zeal. No human anger or sarcastic expression mingled with his words of reproof. His humility sweetened every penance, his charity made his strictness paternal, while the uprightness and purity of his motive was abundantly proved by the severity with which he treated himself. Although prudent in everything, he was no vain respecter of persons, and he tolerated no abuse on account of the age or learning or dignified position of the delinquent, saying, that as superior he was responsible for all his subjects, the old as well as young, the learned as well as the more simple.

We may judge what his zeal would be as Prior in correcting abuses without any fear of men, when we remember the freedom with which he admonished his fellow religious of their defects, even when not holding office. On this point Father Antist tells us that, "Father Lewis was never so familiar in friendship with any of his brethren as not to be able to admonish them of their defects; yea, rather those that he loved most dearly he used to reprove, when occasion offered, most severely, and this even in those matters which are considered by our constitutions to be light faults. His expression was that he did not wish to go himself to hell, or even to purgatory, on account of the faults of his friends. In the case also of those who had placed him under obligations by kind services, although he showed lively feelings of gratitude, still he did not hesitate to point out their failings and to reprove them when necessary."\*

Indolence met no mercy at his hands, for he considered it the destruction of regular discipline; he waged especial

\* Antist, chapter x. 192.

war against the least symptoms of idle visiting or talking outside the convent. If there was one point of discipline he was more rigid in enforcing than another, it certainly was religious solitude, for he would not allow the Fathers to go out of the convent without an urgent necessity, and when permission was asked he frequently refused. He insisted most strongly on the obligation of spending their time in study unless while occupied in the confessional or some other sacred duty, and warned them constantly of the dangers to religious fervour that result from unnecessary intercourse and conversation with secular people.

One of the principal means he employed for the maintenance of a spirit of fervour in the community was the chapter in which he continually exhorted his subjects to practise the various duties of their state with becoming perfection; warning them to cultivate a spirit of holy fear of God and His judgments, which, according to the wise man, makes a man neglect nothing. The fire that burnt in his own heart imparted a wonderful vehemence to his words, and gave them a convincing and persuading power, his own example, of course, adding a thousand fold to their efficacy. He recommended voluntary abstinence from food, and the practice of sacrificing a portion of food in order to bestow it on the poor of Christ. Poverty and detachment were also favourite subjects of these exhortations, but he enlarged chiefly on the necessity of obedience and humble subjection of will, saying that "the poverty most valued by God was that by which men abandon their own will." He impressed upon his hearers the efficacy of habitual compunction of heart, and humble contrition of soul which God never despises, admonishing them at the same time to guard carefully against every occasion of sin, even the most venial. Besides these instructions he pointed out with the utmost sweetness, but still without disguising the truth, however unpleasant, the faults which needed

correction in each one, and though he did not hesitate to inflict penance, the gentle charity with which all was mingled rendered his least word of reproof more efficacious than the punishments of less holy superiors.

His humility being so true and perfect, he dreaded the slightest sign of esteem, and it evidently pained him when addressed by the religious with any of the customary titles of honour commonly given to superiors, as for instance, Your Reverence, Your Paternity, because he considered himself unworthy of any other title than that of sinner. He tolerated such things out of respect to his office, but was evidently unwilling to hear them frequently used. He treated all the religious with marked respect and courtesy; when they came to his cell, as Prior, he immediately offered them a chair, and if they were Priests he often kissed their hands in reverence, although it annoyed him greatly if any one tried to give him a like token of respect.

In fact, he was remarkable for his polite and courteous manners with all classes of people; but this affability which made him agreeable to every one was the effect quite as much of his sanctity as of good training in youth. He was thus able to accommodate himself to any society he found himself among, and was able to be all to all that he might attract all to Christ. He was quite uneasy if any person, whether a religious or a layman, uncovered his head out of respect while speaking to him. Francis Blanes, a gentleman of Valencia, once met him walking in the cloister of the convent, although whether during his office as Prior is not stated. Blanes, out of respect to the holy Religious, kissed his hand, bending at the same time one knee to the ground. Lewis was horrified. He fell at once on both knees before Don Francis, and implored him for the love of God never to honour him thus again. "Such honour," he said, "ought to be paid to the Saints, not to a wretched sinner like me."

Although continually occupied in the various duties of

his office, which in so large a community must have been particularly engrossing and anxious in their nature, Lewis increased rather than diminished his old habits of contemplation and penance. Having learnt so thoroughly in early youth the difficult lesson of uniting perfectly the active with the contemplative life, duties in themselves distracting now appeared rather a help than an impediment to his interior conversation with God.

His continual prayer was the active principle of his whole life. It was his food, his light, his medicine, and the secret of his astonishing power. His usual habit, as before stated, was to spend four hours and a half daily in the recollection of mental prayer, two hours in the morning, two in the evening, and half an hour after dinner. But very frequently the religious left the Prior in prayer after Matins, to find him still absorbed in contemplation when the signal for Prime called them again to choir. Like Jesus Christ, he spent the night apart in prayer. His diligence in attending choir was heroic, and as superior he felt a double obligation of regularity resting upon him. He well knew that as soldiers without their officers, so are religious without their superiors. What constituted the heroism of this love of the choir was the suffering state of his health. He often was obliged to lean for support against the wall to prevent falling through weakness and pain on his way to the church; sometimes he was unable, even with all his fortitude, to stand, and yet unwilling to be absent, he followed the office and other community exercises sitting.

During these years of priorship the different diseases he had so long endured were greatly aggravated, especially the ulceration of his leg, which occasioned him intense pain. In spite of this, it was very difficult to induce him to dine in the infirmary, for he complained that the infirmarians were too indulgent to him, obliging him to eat

more than he needed, besides objecting to his desire to leave the best part of his food for the poor. But though so rigorous with himself, as to squeeze aloe juice over the little food he took, his care for his community was extreme. He provided liberally and generously for all, though he was careful also to guard against the opposite extreme, and would allow nothing contrary to religious poverty and simplicity. While exhorting his religious to self-denial, he considered it his duty as their Father to provide everything necessary, and thus each member of the community felt that the loving eye of a father was watching over them; if they needed anything, whether in clothes, food, or other external things, it was supplied before they had time to ask. There was considerable scarcity of provisions during these years, the distress throughout the country was general, and consequently the applications for relief at the convent door were more than usually numerous. The procurator was often inclined to lessen the supply in the refectory on account of these difficulties, but St. Lewis would by no means tolerate the idea. His maxim was, that as the religious had earned the alms bestowed on the convent by their labours in the confessional, the pulpit, the choir, and other ways, it was only just they should be expended for their advantage and maintenance. If any of his community were ill, the Saint treated them with the tenderness of an anxious mother. However poor the house might be, everything in food and medicine was abundantly procured for the sick, and the affectionate love with which it was given made it doubly efficacious. Many declared that in their own homes they had never had half the things that St. Lewis provided for them while in the infirmary.

The same generous charity was visible when the Provincial Chapter was celebrated in the convent of Valencia. The number of Fathers was large; as the season was one

of scarcity, the procurator was anxious about the expenses, but the Prior trusted in God only, and his confidence was rewarded. Large alms flowed in from the most unexpected quarters, the fruit of the Saint's prayers. As an instance, Father Lawrence Zamora, a Carthusian monk, relates that he was entrusted by some one with a donation for St. Lewis at this very time of the Chapter. He carried it to the convent, and on entering the Prior's cell the Saint greeted him thus: "You are bringing me over a hundred pounds, Father." "Who could have told you that?" replied the astonished Carthusian. The Saint pointed to his crucifix saying, "Behold the One who told me." Before leaving, the Fathers of the Chapter all united in thanking the Prior for the truly brotherly way in which he had received and entertained them; but he, prostrating himself humbly before them, begged their pardon for not having treated them better, as their merits and labours deserved.

His whole conduct as superior manifested the perfection of the virtues of humility and charity to which he had attained, and proved that his sanctity was genuine and sincere. He verily and indeed regarded himself as the least of his brethren; it caused him the sharpest pain, raised in him even a holy indignation, if anything was said which seemed to exalt him above others. He was not one of those who desire to be thought humble, but he sincerely longed to be regarded as vile and of no account. On one occasion a person who for some reason was offended with the community spoke of his feelings to the Saint, but expressed at the same time his deep respect for him personally, however he might regard the rest of the religious. This was most displeasing to St. Lewis; he defended his brethren, quoting the words of the prophet Elias, when flying from Jezabel he sat in sorrow under the juniper tree, "I am no better than my fathers" (3 Kings xix. 4).

His zeal for sacred studies has been frequently noticed,

but now that he was superior in a convent of studies he had more opportunity of promoting and encouraging them.

This was attested by the illustrious Bishop of Albarracin, Father Jerome de la Nuza, who was considered one of the lights of his time for his profound acquaintance with every branch of sacred science, and has even been called the Chrysostom of his age. This learned prelate, who was a novice in the convent of Valencia, had an inexpressible dislike to study, considering himself incapable of making any progress; but this repugnance was overcome by the earnest exhortations of St. Lewis, who almost forced him to apply his attention to his books. He often quoted the words of St. Jerome, "*Orationi lectio, lectioni succedat oratio.*"

It might have been supposed that advancing age, constant illness, and a multitude of pressing duties would have made the Saint more indulgent to himself in the way of afflictive penances. But on the contrary, the more he needed strength the greater were his austerities, having imbibed the spirit of the Apostle who said, "When I am weak" in the flesh, "then am I powerful" in the spirit; and of St. Augustine, who declared that "pampered flesh burns and consumes the soul as fire burns tow." The walls of his cell were still bespattered with blood drawn by his discipline, and the religious often heard him scourging himself with terrible severity. In particular, Father John Baga related that during the last year of the Saint's priorship, he saw him stealing gently at about eleven o'clock one night into the chapel of St. Vincent Ferrer, and soon he heard fearful blows of the discipline. He concealed himself to watch, and after a time he perceived the Saint coming out, and after looking round to see if he was observed, return to his cell from which loud and vehement sighs of sorrow and love were audible.

The munificent charity towards the poor which had

always been one of his especial characteristics seemed to increase as he grew older, and as the convent of Valencia had more resources than the smaller ones where he had been superior before, his alms were proportionably more abundant. The customary alms of the convent were by no means trifling, but they were far from satisfying the charity of the new Prior. He had a willing and zealous coadjutor in Father Dominic Anadon, who held for the space of forty years the office of almoner in the convent, and whose charity was so great that God had rewarded it more than once by evident miracles.

St. Lewis charged his already generous almoner to take whatever bread he needed from the common stock in addition to what had been usually given to the poor at the convent gates. As scarcity prevailed, the number of applicants was increased; but the Saint could not refuse, feeling confident that God would provide. Some of the community, thinking him imprudent, begged him to remember that the community was his first duty; but he reminded them of what the venerable Father Michael of St. Dominic had said to those who complained of the abundant alms he lavished on the poor during the famine in the year 1556. "If much goes forth there," he replied, pointing to the gate, "much more will return there," pointing towards the church. But what was distributed at the door was only one part of the Saint's alms. Much he gave secretly, and to persons ashamed to ask assistance; it was computed that he helped every day as many as three hundred, many of whom were poor students. Far from suffering, the community was, as before stated, never better supplied, and the debts of the convent were completely discharged.\*

The charity of the Prior towards the Fathers of the Provincial Chapter which held its session in the convent,

\* Vide Fr. Antist.



has already been noticed, and the same Chapter gave St. Lewis a welcome occasion of practising humility. As he was partially deaf, the Fathers thought it better that he should not be one of the "Definitors" or Counsellors of the Chapter, an important office commonly held, among others, by the Prior in whose convent the Chapter is convened. The Saint rejoiced at this little humiliation, and treated the Fathers with more marked consideration and respect than before.

A marvellous vision with which he was at this time favoured proves how acceptable to God was his extreme humility, besides showing how jealous His Divine Majesty is of the honour due to His servants. As the Saint was praying one night in the choir, a religious who had died in the convent, not long before, appeared to him suffering in the flames of purgatory, in order to beg his forgiveness for a fault he had committed against him. This religious had been a novice under the Saint, and Lewis had frequently pointed out, with his accustomed freedom, various defects that were visible in his conduct. This he had ventured to do on one occasion before he was Prior, and the religious, not happening to be in a frame of mind in which the reproof was welcome, had answered with some asperity of manner, that the Saint appeared to do nothing but notice the faults and failings of other people. He afterwards proceeded so far as to reproach Lewis as a well-meaning but ignorant man. With all sweetness and humility the Saint acknowledged that the reproach was just and well deserved, but he added, "Knowledge is not always certain of heaven, for Lucifer, the most highly intellectual of all God's creatures, fell miserably into hell."

The soul of this departed religious appeared therefore to the Saint, and apologised very humbly for the disrespectful words he had used, "Pardon my rashness, Father, I beseech you, for God will not allow me to enter heaven

until I have received your forgiveness, until you, in your charity, as a sign of pardon, have offered a Mass for my soul's repose." St. Lewis, it need hardly be said, expressed at once his entire pardon of the offence. The next morning he offered the holy Sacrifice with extreme devotion and many tears for his spiritual son, who appeared to him again on the following night, but now shining in great glory, released from all suffering. "Do you know, Father," asked the humble Saint, "and can you tell me in what state I am before God?" "Persevere in your present course," was the reply, "go on serving God as you now do, for God hath special care of you."

This was not the only occasion on which it pleased God to comfort His servant by the assurance of the eternal salvation of one of his own subjects. During the period of his office as Prior, a lay brother, named Peter, died suddenly without being fortified by the last Sacraments, although he had received Holy Communion only the morning before. The community was greatly afflicted at his sudden departure. Lewis offered up most earnest prayers for the soul of the brother so suddenly called to judgment. About a month after, in March, for Brother Peter died in February, Don Roderigo Salzeda, a royal Councillor, while conversing with the Saint remarked an unusual expression of peculiar joy in his countenance; he ventured to inquire the reason of his gladness. "I do indeed rejoice," replied St. Lewis, "because last night I had the consolation of seeing in my cell Brother Peter, in a state of glory, his face expressing the utmost jubilee; in his mouth there appeared something white and shining as a sign of the supernatural sweetness he was enjoying.

On other occasions he mentioned the same vision to some of his religious, but less circumstantially, contenting himself with saying that he had felt deeply grieved by the unexpected death of Brother Peter, but that God had con-

soled him ; and to one father he related the fact of the brother's appearance in the third person, as was frequently his custom in mentioning some favour he had received. "A certain religious of this house," he said, "was full of sorrow at Brother Peter's death, but after spending many nights in prayer for his eternal rest, God comforted him by a vision of the Brother's soul in the glory of heaven." This Brother Peter had been remarkable for a special devotion to St. Vincent Ferrer. The chapel, which was formerly St. Vincent's cell, being entrusted to his care, he had been most diligent in keeping the lamp constantly burning, and the altar properly ornamented in honour of his patron.

Although the spiritual fruit of his government was visible to all in the convent, there was one person dissatisfied, that was the holy Prior himself. He was in constant fear and apprehension concerning the account he would be obliged, as superior, to render to God for the souls of his subjects. Feeling conscious of the difficulty of performing many of the duties of his charge on account of his ever increasing infirmities, knowing also that the end of his life was drawing near, he desired to resign his office in order to retire into his cell and devote himself in peace and quiet to uninterrupted prayer and contemplation. Influenced by these considerations he determined at last to present a petition to the General, Father Seraphin Cavalli, to beg his permission to resign the priorship.

The General was at first moved to compassion by the Saint's pathetic appeal, and appeared inclined to grant his request, but afterwards altering his purpose, he commanded him to retain the office, and by no means to allow any one else to have the government of the convent, expressing an earnest wish that the Order could have many superiors like the Prior of Valencia. The only practical result, therefore, of the application was, that the General

gave the Saint more extensive powers, than strictly belonged to his office. Finding that obedience thus prevented the accomplishment of his desires, Lewis earnestly exhorted the religious to pray that he might have grace to discharge his duties in a manner pleasing to God, and that it might be granted to him not to finish his life in office, but free from the formidable burden of the care of souls, and able to attend without distraction to the one important affair of his own everlasting salvation.

A quotation from Father Antist who draws his picture of the Saint from personal knowledge, having been a member of the community during his priorship, will be a suitable ending to this chapter. "Whilst he was Prior, although the duties of his office occupied him so much that he was often engaged on them during a great part of the night, still he was so careful not to neglect his own soul, that every evening he was accustomed to go to confession, and afterwards to watch for a considerable time in prayer. Notwithstanding this he always rose for Matins, and then only rested for a short time. Often also at night he used to feel his way about the convent in the dark, to assure himself that silence was rigidly observed, and that everything was in order."

## CHAPTER IV.

ST. LEWIS PRIOR AT VALENCIA (*continued*).

*May 15, 1575—May 15, 1578.*

Visiting Prisoners—Condemned Criminals—Prison of Valencia—Discernment of Spirits—Ray of Light—A Lesson on Providence—Cure of a Jesuit Father—Love of Religious Orders—Vocations—The Convent Barber—Supernatural Insight—Lent at Moncada—Style of Preaching—Wonderful Cures—Foretells a Death—Divine Consolation—Feast of St. Peter Martyr—His Office Ends.

“When did we see Thee sick or in prison, and came to Thee? And the King, answering, shall say to them: Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of these My least brethren, you did it to Me.”—ST. MATTHEW xiv. 39, 40.

“Though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I fear no evils, for Thou art with me.”—PSALM xxii. 4.



THE heroic charity of St. Lewis to the sick and poor has frequently been described, but no mention has yet been made of another class of sufferers who were often the deserving objects of the Saint's tender compassion. To visit and assist prisoners, even those undergoing the just punishment of their crimes, as it forms one of the seven corporal works of mercy, has always been a favourite exercise of the Saints. St. Catherine of Siena obtained contrition for more than one apparently hardened criminal, while St. Philip Neri and St. Pius V. both saved the lives of persons condemned to death.

In the sixteenth century the laws were most rigorous, in

fact, to our ideas, cruel throughout all Europe, as the history of the reigns of Henry VIII. and Elizabeth of England exemplifies. At that period, there was therefore more than common scope for the benevolent exertions of the charitable. On several occasions we find St. Lewis interposing with success in behalf of those who were being punished either unjustly or with undue severity. Once, his righteous indignation at the cruel torture inflicted on a poor wretch condemned to death, obtained a commutation of his sentence. While the miserable man was being led to execution, instead of being allowed to attend to his soul in his last moments, his face was being barbarously gashed with a knife, in order to force him to reveal the names of his accomplices. Saint Lewis witnessed this cruelty with the greatest horror; boldly interposing he exclaimed, "By your tortures you are not inflicting death once on this man according to sentence, but you are killing him over and over again. It is unjust!" So vehemently and with such an air of authority was this rebuke uttered, that the officers in charge, put to open shame, ordered the poor criminal back to prison. Ultimately even his life was spared. On another occasion a man of some position being accused of a crime before the tribunals, his life was evidently in extreme danger. The Saint came to his rescue. Making the gentleman's cause his own, he pleaded so eloquently in his defence that he obtained his discharge. These are only two examples, out of many, of accused persons for whom he pleaded, sometimes because he considered their guilt not sufficiently proved, sometimes because being friendless they could not defend themselves, and often was his charity rewarded by obtaining for them either freedom, or at least some merciful mitigation of their sentence. Those who were suffering imprisonment, he visited with tender charity, bestowing upon them every possible assistance, spiritual and temporal; and certainly if the Spanish prisons of the

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sixteenth century resembled English jails of the same period, or even of later times, no kind of assistance was more needed.\*

Many instances of the marvellous spiritual discernment with which St. Lewis was endowed have already been related, and this supernatural faculty of reading the minds and consciences of others increased as the end of his life

\* Mr. Hoskins, in his "Spain as It Is," gives a very interesting account of a modern prison in Valencia, which would certainly have pleased St. Lewis, and is worthy of particular notice, because it aims at making the jail a reformatory, as well as a merely penal establishment. "It is greatly to the credit of Valencia," he writes, "that she can boast of one of the best conducted prisons in Europe. I did not see more than three or four guardians to keep order. They say there are only a dozen old soldiers, and not a bar or bolt that might not be easily broken. The governor, a colonel in the army, has established military discipline, and the convicts are divided into companies. The officers are all convicts, who, of course, are acquainted with the temper and dispositions of the prisoners, and are best able to manage them: and the prospect of advancement to higher grades is an inducement to all to behave well. When a convict enters, he is asked what trade or employment he will work at or learn; and above forty are open to him; if he declines to work at any he is sent to the public works . . . . There were weavers and spinners of every description, manufacturing all qualities—from the coarsest woollen cloths to the most beautiful damasks and rich silks. There were blacksmiths, shoemakers, basket-makers, &c., and they also had a printing machine. The greatest cleanliness prevailed in every part of the establishment. The dormitories were well ventilated, and water, the great requisite in a sultry climate, within reach of all. There was a neat chapel for their devotions, and a garden for exercise planted with oranges. There was also a poultry yard for their amusement, with pheasants and various kinds of birds. One-fourth of the profit of their labour is given them, another fourth they are entitled to on leaving. The other half goes to the establishment, and often this is sufficient for all expenses. Instruction is open to all every day in a large school, which all under twenty are obliged to attend for one hour, and any prisoner above that age may join the classes. This system may be thought too indulgent, but what is the result? During the three last years not one prisoner has been returned to it, and in the ten previous years the average was not more than one per cent."—*Spain as It Is*.

approached. A soul in which the grace of God resided attracted him without any conscious act on his part, while he experienced a corresponding repulsion from a man laden with the guilt of mortal sin. "I can hardly explain why it is," he once said to Father Francis Alemani, "but when I meet some people I am filled with such intense joy, that I feel inclined to embrace them, while the very sight of others fills me at once with sorrow." But Father Francis did not find it difficult to conjecture the cause of these feelings, which in so mortified a man could not proceed from mere natural aversion or attraction, but from the supernatural effect which the state of souls exercised on his own delicate spiritual sense. Not long afterwards, Father Francis saw a man, whom he knew to be leading a vicious life, knock at the Saint's door; instead of receiving him with his usual affability and sweetness, the holy Father was evidently deeply agitated, dismissing him abruptly without any apparent cause. A certain ecclesiastic of Valencia experienced the like treatment when he visited the Saint, but happily suspecting the cause he repented of a sin into which he had fallen, and on visiting St. Lewis again he was cordially welcomed by the holy man, who conversed familiarly with him for a considerable time.

But although so clear a knowledge of the good state of other souls was vouchsafed him, he was still allowed to live himself in constant fear, arising not from any want of confidence in God's merciful goodness, but from his extreme humility, his deep self-knowledge, and the exalted idea Divine Grace had given him of the perfection demanded of religious. Still he was not always left in darkness without any consolation. On St. Catherine of Alexandria's Festival, during one of the years of his priorship, he was listening to Surius' life of the illustrious Virgin and Martyr, to whom, as Protector of the Order of St.



Dominic, he entertained especial devotion. Suddenly he interrupted the reader by looking upwards with a face of rapture, and loud exclamations of surprise. His companion, after waiting for a time, endeavoured to attract his attention, but the Saint could only cry out, Good ! Good ! At last being pressed for an explanation, he said, "I saw on a sudden a mighty light in the heavens shining with marvellous beauty, and from the light I heard a voice pronouncing these joyful words, "Although now you live in darkness, a time will come when you will shine with a splendour such as you now see." Thus sometimes a ray of comforting light fell on his soul from the heavenly Jerusalem.

The compassion of the Saint, as he related himself to Father Antist, was deeply moved by the affliction of a certain Prelate, who had been deprived of his office through unjust accusations. One day as he was meditating on the marvellous and hidden judgments of Divine Providence, by which the righteous are often allowed to suffer many tribulations in this life, he saw from his cell a poor sparrow with a broken leg fluttering on the ground, unable to fly ; at the same time he seemed to hear a voice, either exterior or interior, addressing him in those words of holy writ, "Not one of them shall fall to the ground without your Father," referring of course to the instruction of our Lord on the providence of God in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. He was thus reminded never to allow himself to question the justice and mercy of God's dealings with men, as wonderful as they are secret, but to adore in silence. Shortly afterwards the Prelate whose unmerited disgrace had so afflicted him, was restored to his former honourable position.

During Advent, a Jesuit Father, named Gaspar Valpetrosa visited the convent, where he was obliged to remain, like St. Benedict in St. Scholastica's convent, by a storm of

extreme violence. During the night, being attacked by the most acute pains in his head, he tossed about restlessly, unable to sleep till the morning. Being still in extreme pain he begged to be led into the holy Father's cell; the Prior, receiving him with a bright smile, inquired in a sympathising tone how he felt, when the headache, though so violent a moment before as to deprive him even of sight, suddenly and completely disappeared. Father Gaspar himself used to relate this, feeling convinced that his sudden cure was extraordinary, while he further declared that his soul received much light, together with strong attractions to virtue, by conversing with St. Lewis. On the evening before his illness, he listened for some hours to the holy Prior speaking of God, and such was the spiritual sweetness he experienced, that he could hardly believe that the conversation had continued for an hour.

With a largeness of heart which is the fruit of genuine sanctity, St. Lewis entertained feelings of affection and esteem for all the Religious Orders, for he considered them to be seminaries preparing souls for heaven. He disliked books that seemed to praise one Order to the disparagement of others, as if all were not founded by an inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. In almost all the Orders there were certain souls to whom he was united with a special bond of sympathy and friendship. Often he directed those who sought his advice to enter the ranks of various religious Orders. It was noticed what pleasure it afforded him to have an opportunity of praising different religious persons; and that he was as much rejoiced at the glorious martyrdom of Michael de Arandiga of the Order of Montesa, as if he had belonged to his own Order. Escolanus, in his history of Valencia, asserts that St. Lewis had a vision of the soul of this holy religious entering the heavenly Jerusalem, at the very time he was burnt by the Moors, but on what authority does not appear. A religious vocation and the

grace to follow the divine call were frequent effects of the Saint's preaching. As an instance of this, the case of Francis Gutierrez may be mentioned. He had been considering for some time the important matter of his vocation, and had felt impelled to enter the religious state, while at the same time he dreaded the sacrifice entailed by such a step. A confidential friend to whom alone he had mentioned this interior contest between nature and grace, had often advised him to enter the Society of Jesus, and exhorted him to submit the question of his vocation to the enlightened direction of Father Lewis. This, Francis had not the courage to do, but on the Feast of the Visitation of Our Lady, he accompanied his friend to hear the Saint preach in the church of St. Catherine the Martyr. During the sermon Lewis noticed that Our Lady visited her cousin St. Elizabeth, in order to assist her in childbirth; drawing from thence the lesson that it was a work of charity to help others to bring forth the good ideas they had conceived in their mind into external action. He then described most accurately a secret conversation which had taken place between the two friends, though no intimation of it had been given to him; speaking strongly about the necessity of following a vocation, though of course he said nothing to draw attention to any particular person. The effect was instantaneous. Francis could not restrain his tears, and determined at once to enter religion. That very day he presented himself to the Provincial of the Society to beg for admission.

On one important occasion Lewis was compelled to preach before a very large and distinguished audience in Valencia. He had vainly endeavoured to excuse himself, being at the time very ill. His voice, also, was weak and husky. Not being able to avoid the duty, he put all his confidence in God, and notwithstanding the immense concourse of people, his voice was distinctly audible in the remotest parts of the building.

A Carthusian monk of the convent of Portacoeli used to relate a characteristic anecdote about the Saint. Before entering the Carthusian Order he had followed the trade of a barber. He visited the Dominican convent at regular intervals, to shave the tonsures of the religious. When St. Lewis was Prior, Bartholomew Penaranda, the barber, was much struck by his recollected demeanour and humble countenance. Whether Penaranda was attending more to the Saint's virtues than to his tonsure, or whether he desired to test the fortitude of the holy man, he does not tell us, but he expresses great admiration at his cheerful patience when cut by the razor, "even so as to draw blood somewhat." The worthy barber adds, "He was as humble and patient at such times as if he were the last novice in the convent." One day the holy Prior calling Penaranda into his own cell, asked him to promise to answer one question with perfect sincerity. "To the best of my power, Father, I will answer correctly," replied the barber. "I desire to know," said St. Lewis, "whether you have ever thought of becoming a religious?" "Never!" was the decided answer. "Mark my words," returned St. Lewis with a smile, "I know that you will die in a religious Order." A desire, which he had never before experienced, to devote himself to God as a religious, soon after sprung up in Penaranda's heart. It became so powerful that he joined not long afterwards the strict Order of the Carthusians.

A striking instance of the knowledge vouchsafed to the Saint of absent and hidden things is related as happening during the last year of his priorship. A holy old man who saw a gentleman named Rodrigo Salzedo leaving the Prior's cell, congratulated him on his intimacy with so great a Saint. "What proof have you that he is a Saint?" asked Salzedo. "I can relate from my own personal knowledge," replied the old man, "one very remarkable example of the

extraordinary light given to him by God. On one occasion I was engaged in mental prayer after midnight in my own room, when I felt inspired to pray fervently for Father Lewis Bertrand. When next I visited him he at once addressed me thus, 'My Brother, I offer you most grateful thanks!' 'For what, Father?' 'For having, at such an hour and day, prayed for me to God. While you offered those prayers you extended your arms in the form of a cross.' Now this was done in the secrecy of my own room. I am certain I had mentioned it to no one."

Salzedo could not have been much astonished at this, for he had experienced more than once a similar supernatural power of penetration in his holy confessor. He was accustomed to ask advice and direction from St. Lewis in any affair of importance, but on one occasion he accepted an important office from the Viceroy of Valencia without consulting the Saint. Immediately after informing the Viceroy in private that he would undertake the duties of the vacant office, he regretted not having spoken to the Saint, so that he went at once to consult him on the propriety of acceding to the wishes of the Viceroy, without even hinting that he had already accepted the office. But Lewis was not to be deceived. He replied with a smile, "Nay, this is not the time to ask advice. You have already decided the question." With some confusion Salzedo admitted that this was correct. Afterwards he said to Father Vincent Justinian, "It is evident that I must be on my guard, for Father Lewis, my confessor, appears to know everything I do."

In 1577 the Saint undertook to preach during Lent at a village called Moncada, where there was a convent of the Order. He was able to arrange this, although with heavy labour to himself, in spite of the duties of his office, because Moncada was near the city of Valencia only one Spanish league distant. He could therefore, though at the

expense of considerable labour, return each day to his own convent. Although the sermons of the holy Father produced such wonderful effects for the conversion of souls, he does not appear to have enjoyed the natural gifts of an eloquent speaker. Eloquent in the highest and best sense he certainly was ; for he moved the most stubborn hearts to repentance, while he excited fervent desires of perfection in the minds of the good, but this was the effect of supernatural rather than of any natural gifts. His burning soul communicated its flames to the souls of others. His words were the pouring forth of his own spiritual life. They possessed a power far above that of mere natural force.

But if a man, moved by the high reputation he enjoyed as a preacher, had gone to the sermon expecting a display of oratorical powers, he would have been disappointed. Many other preachers in Valencia spoke with a far greater degree of elegance, with far more ready tongue, with voices more sonorous, in tones more pleasing ; but no one could equal the Saint in that fervid earnestness and burning zeal which, going straight to the heart, worked so many wonders of conversion. This supernatural fire prevented men from noticing the natural defects of the holy preacher. The words of St. Paul exactly describe the preaching of St. Lewis : " My speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in the showing of the Spirit and power " (1 Cor. ii. 4).

When asked to preach, Lewis would often say, " I am no preacher, but only a poor deaf man." But experience proved that the words of the poor deaf man, coming from a heart on fire with Divine charity, had a mysterious power to convert souls to God.

In listening to the sermons of others, Lewis showed his humility and his desire to hear the Word of God. He praised and encouraged all, listening with humility to any preacher, however unlearned or disagreeable in manner, as

long as he saw evidence of a pure intention to convert souls. The only thing intolerable in his eyes was any appearance of pride, or a mere bombastic display of vanity. He was delighted to listen not only to the sermons of the Archbishop or of some renowned preacher, but to the humblest and youngest of his own subjects; so much so, that if the matter of the sermon was useful, he often forgot to give the signal when the appointed time had elapsed.

Whilst preaching the Lent at Moncada, he happened to be in the house of a merchant named Joseph del Campo, and while conversing with the family on some spiritual subject, Angela Simarra, the mistress of the house, brought him a young maiden named Sperantia Assensi, a niece of her own, who had for many years suffered from terrible scrofulous sores in the neck; feeling her confidence increase by the fervent words of the Saint, she implored him to place upon the child that hand which had been sanctified by holding, during the holy Sacrifice, the sacred Body of Christ. She related how as much as nine years before, the child had been taken to the King of France, Francis II., to be touched by him, for she was suffering from the "king's evil," but without effect. Medical treatment seemed only to increase her sufferings. St. Lewis, knowing that a miracle was expected, humbly excused himself, advising her to apply to a person living in a neighbouring town, who had the reputation of being able to heal this complaint. At length, however, overcome by the importunity of the afflicted Angela, he ordered the maiden to take off the bandages from her neck. The running sores, full of purulent matter, were so disgusting to the sight that the poor girl hesitated, saying that she could scarcely bear them uncovered herself. The Saint sat near the window and bid the girl to approach, and then formed on these sores the holy sign of the cross. But this did not content him, for filled with the fire of charity, under one of those special

movements of the Holy Spirit sometimes vouchsafed to the Saints, he so far triumphed over nature as to apply his tongue to these sores, which others could hardly bear to behold. Not for a moment only, but for a considerable time, until they were entirely cleansed; then again he blessed them with the sign of the cross. It will no doubt be supposed that this sight must have been horrifying to the spectators, however meritorious to the Saint; but all feelings of natural repugnance were prevented by the marvellous effulgence of his countenance and the wonderful ecstasy which followed, during which he remained for a long time motionless, and wrapt in contemplation. Those present stood transfixed with astonishment, unable to restrain their tears. After a time, when the Saint recovered his senses, he quietly continued the spiritual discourse that had been thus interrupted. The cure of the child was not instantaneous, but after this marvellous act of charity no more matter formed in her neck, and she felt considerably relieved. The next time the holy man came to preach, a week later, when they asked him to see the girl again, he answered that there was no necessity for it. In another week the disease was entirely cured. The Parish Priest of Moncada, Master Baltazar Bargallo, was a witness of this miracle, in which we hardly know whether more to admire the wonderful cure of the girl, or the astounding charity and mortification of St. Lewis.\*

Three years afterwards, only one year therefore before the Saint's death, the above miracle was related in the house of a lady of Valencia, named Doña Violenta Milano. One of her maid-servants hearing the account, begged to be allowed to apply to the Saint, as she was

\* See an interesting account of the deliverance of the Parish Priest of Moncada from terrible mental anxiety as to the validity of his ordination in 1570, related by Mrs. Shapcote in the "Legends of the Blessed Sacrament."



afflicted with the same complaint. She was conducted by two ladies to the Dominican Church, where she heard the Saint's Mass in the chapel of St. Vincent. Afterwards, with some difficulty, they persuaded him to give his blessing to the girl. He endeavoured at first to excuse himself by saying that they ought to apply to some Saint for such a favour, not to a poor sinner such as he was ; but compassion at last overcame his repugnance. Besides giving her a blessing, he touched the diseased neck, praying for her recovery. His rosary was also laid upon the scrofulous sores, which began quickly to heal. In a month's time all signs of the malignant disease had disappeared.

On another occasion the holy Prior was applied to for assistance by a wealthy citizen of Valencia, named Don Michael Beneyto, whose wife Frances was suffering intensely in the pains of childbirth. Death appeared imminent. The doctors were in despair ; but the Saint, quietly taking a slip of paper, wrote on it the antiphon of our Blessed Lady. "*Nesciens Mater Virgo virum, peperit sine dolore Salvatorem sæculorum, Ipsum Regem Angelorum sola Virgo lactabat ubere de cœlo pleno.*"\* This antiphon he directed the suffering lady to hold in her hand, together with a blessed candle. The child was almost immediately born, but only lived long enough to receive baptism.

Although it was not always the will of God that he should raise up the sick who invoked his succour, their souls he could always assist. The same lady, Angela Simarra, whose niece he had cured so wonderfully at Moncada, one day called at the convent, with most earnest entreaties that he would visit a relation of hers in order to read a Gospel for her, according to his custom with the sick. The Saint answered in a moment, "Is she not your

\* The Virgin Mother, knowing not man, brought forth without pain the Saviour of the world ; and she alone, a Virgin, gave heavenly milk to the King of Angels.

cousin?" After hearing the answer, he shook his head as a sign that he could do nothing. Angela departed in a most disconsolate state of mind; but as her cousin was suffering much, she shortly returned to the Saint, imploring him for the love of God not to refuse her request. "Very well," was the reply, "I will come this evening." "Do not trouble yourself to do that, Father," said Angela, "to-morrow morning will be soon enough." "No," answered Lewis, "to-night, or not at all." He called therefore, exhorted the sick woman to resign herself into the hands of God, while he consoled the rest of the family as if they had already lost her. They were all surprised, because the illness being consumption, every one expected her to survive at least two months. Hardly had the Saint departed when such an alarming change took place, that before the next morning the lady was dead. Then did Angela understand the words of St. Lewis,—either to-night, or not at all.

Shortly before the term of his office expired, on the Feast of St. Peter Martyr, the 29th of April 1578, as he returned to his cell after Matins had been chanted in the choir, Lewis heard these words pronounced by a supernatural voice, "*Deo magis placet afflictio cordis, contritio et tribulatio quam dulcedo solatium et consolatio.*" "Sorrow of heart, contrition, and tribulation are more pleasing to God than sweetness, comfort, and consolation." He related this Divine favour himself to a spiritual friend with whom he was very intimate. When his friend inquired what effect these words produced on his soul, whether he felt apprehensive of future trials, he replied that on the contrary they had mightily consoled and enlightened him, having delivered him entirely from a certain sadness he was labouring under.

Another consoling vision, by which the soul of St. Lewis received a slight foretaste of the joy with which he would soon be inundated for eternity when God Himself would

wipe away all tears from his eyes, is related on the authority of Father Michael de Vera, a Carthusian, who declared that he received it from a devout person much given to spiritual things, to whom it had been confided by St. Lewis himself. He had been conversing with this person when with great simplicity he related that one day he heard a voice saying these words, "Brother Lewis, your sins are already forgiven." Then, not in the spirit, but with his bodily eyes, he saw a Dove which flew towards him and put its beak into his mouth. As Lewis requested that this vision should be kept a secret, the person to whom he had spoken mentioned it to no one till after the death of the Saint.

At last the fifteenth of May arrived. The Saint was rejoiced to find himself relieved of the weighty responsibility involved in governing so important a convent as that of Valencia. His humility had made him sincerely convinced that the duties of so high an office far surpassed his powers. The respect paid to him in such a position was most repugnant to his humble soul, giving him more lively pain than contempt causes the proud to endure. The gift of the holy fear of God which he possessed in unusual measure made him dread the account he must render to God for the souls committed to his care. Then we must not forget that his bodily infirmities were daily increasing as the end of his pilgrimage approached. All these things combined to make the office of Prior one of his heaviest crosses. Now he was free. Without fear of neglecting duty, he could now retire into his cell, his earthly paradise, there to be alone with God—devoting all his time to preparation for the approaching summons into the house of his Eternity.

"He left this convent," writes Father Aviñone, "improved in spiritual as well as in temporal welfare, and all the religious thoroughly instructed in the duties of their state."

## CHAPTER V.

### THE EVENING OF LIFE.

*May 1578—January 1580.*

Conduct of Lewis out of Office—Patient Charity—Blessing a Fountain—Revelation of the King of Portugal's Death—Father Antist's Warnings—Humility, test of Holiness—Illness of Philip II.—Cures a Lady—Easter Procession, 1579—Sermon of the Saint—Vision on Michaelmas Day—Sadness tempered with Sweetness—Salvation of Father Bartholomew—Consolation—Prophecy of Dearth—Power of Prayer—Missing Documents.

"He was known to be faithful in his words, because he saw the God of Light, and called upon the name of the God Almighty."—ECCLUS. xlv. 18, 19.

"Blessed are they that saw thee, and were honoured with thy friendship."—ECCLUS. xlviii. 2.

**T**HREE years still remained before the arrival of that happy day on which God had decreed to call His servant into everlasting rest. During these years, as his sufferings gradually increased, warning him of the approaching end, so also were the favours of Heaven showered upon him in more abundant measure than before.

Once delivered from the burdens of office he showed by his conduct that he considered himself the last and least in the house. He interfered with nothing. He retired into seclusion more entire than that of the Novitiate. He attended only to his own soul. His prayer was more pro-

longed, his penance more rigorous, his humility if possible more profound, while the sweet gentleness of his conduct to all increased with his age, in spite of his growing infirmities.

After this time he never again held office, except during the space of one month when the novices and junior religious were placed under his spiritual direction. When undisturbed by others he scarcely left his cell ; even in the recreation after dinner he seldom broke silence. But the peace of his retirement was as usual constantly interrupted by the calls of charity. The faithful could not suffer his light to be hidden under a bushel, so that he was continually obliged to attend his confessional in the church, while there was hardly a sick person in Valencia who did not implore a visit from the holy Father who had cured so many. A single word from him brought consolation to many a troubled death-bed, a blessing from his hand was valued as a rich treasure. These acts of charity which his tender heart could not refuse, together with the many applications made for sermons by the holy missionary, seriously interfered with that solitude which he had so long desired.

No doubt he was often tempted to envy the monks of Portacoeli their quiet retreat, but still he bravely continued to sacrifice himself to the very last for the salvation of souls, remaining what he had ever been, the refuge of sinners and the consoler of the sorrowful.

It was probably about this time that St. Lewis blessed a spring or fountain, at a place called Rusaffa, not far from the walls of Valencia, the water of which became afterwards famous for miraculous cures. A friend of the Saint, seeing that he was suffering more than usual in health, prevailed upon him after some difficulty to walk with him to Rusaffa for a little change and recreation. Lewis was at this time suffering from continual thirst. After blessing

the water of the fountain sparkling in the sunlight at his feet, he drank some for his refreshment. While talking to his friend as they rested at the fountain, the Saint noticing the suffering appearance of a poor working man who was passing, asked him with much compassion the nature of his malady. "For the last six months," said the man, whose name was Peter Ximenes, "I have been afflicted with a constant fever." "Drink some of this water," replied Lewis. After much hesitation, fearing lest the cold water might be injurious, Peter allowed himself to be persuaded, drank according to the Saint's direction, and was immediately cured.

The report of this miracle beginning to spread among the people after the Saint's death, many made pilgrimages to the fountain he had thus blessed, bringing the sick in hopes of a cure through the intercession of the holy man. A large number of extraordinary cures took place; and the neighbouring trees displayed many a votive offering hung upon their branches in thanksgiving. Father Aviñone enumerates a large number in the third chapter of the third book of his life, but it will not be necessary to enter into the various details.

Another effect of this blessing given by the servant of God to the water, was evident to all who inhabited that neighbourhood. The flow of water having before been scanty, the fountain had often dried up in hot weather, whereas after the blessing Lewis bestowed on it, as if in gratitude for the refreshment it had afforded him, the supply of water was abundant. It was never known to run dry.

In the year 1578, on the Festival of St. Dominic, St. Lewis was favoured by a very remarkable knowledge of an important public event which happened that day in the kingdom of Morocco. King Sebastian of Portugal had undertaken a war with the Moors, against the advice of his

most trusty and experienced counsellors, among others Blessed Bartholomew of the Martyrs, Archbishop of Braga.

The King of Spain, Philip II., had been unable to help his nephew in this rash enterprise, from which he did his utmost to divert him, though with no avail, so that Sebastian was obliged to fight single-handed. The young King of Portugal was distinguished for his virtues. His valour as a soldier was heroic. If his prudence had been equal to his other high qualities, he might have done great things for the Church, and for his country; but his rashness brought him to an untimely end, and involved Portugal in many misfortunes.

On the 17th of June 1578 he sailed from Lisbon with a large fleet to invade Morocco. It will not be necessary to enter into the details of the expedition, which will be found described in the life of Blessed Bartholomew, as well as in the ordinary histories of Portugal. It is mentioned here only as far as it is connected with St. Lewis. On the Feast of St. Dominic, the 4th of August, nearly two months after the Portuguese expedition had sailed for Africa, St. Lewis appeared oppressed with unusual sadness in spite of the joyous solemnity. Speaking to Brother Lewis Primo, who had attended on him during dinner, he said, "While I sat at table to-day, my dear Brother, it was made known to me that the King of Portugal was killed: his army is destroyed. You will hear after a time that this is really the case."

In due time the sad intelligence reached Valencia that the King of Portugal had attacked the Moors, that he Christian army had been completely routed, and the brave young monarch slain.

Not long after this prediction had been uttered, Father Antist, with some other religious, were in the holy Father's cell, when he said with great simplicity, "I hardly know how, but out of this window I have witnessed all the progress of

the Portuguese expedition." Father Antist replied, "This may be a divine revelation, but we must remember also that it might be the work of the devil; therefore I should recommend you to pray earnestly for light, that you may not be deceived by the enemy." This answer was intended to try the Saint's humility, but far from resenting the suggestion of diabolical delusion, he made a gesture of assent, raised his eyes to heaven, ejaculating earnestly, "Yes, indeed, it is very necessary to commend the whole matter to God."

Upon this Antist most truly remarks, "One of the most convincing proofs to my mind of the genuine holiness of this servant of God, was his profound humility regarding these supernatural favours. For as the saints have always considered that there is danger of vain-glory in relating any extraordinary grace with which the soul has been enriched by God, I always warned him to take heed not to be deluded by the crafty devices of Satan, when he spoke of anything of this nature as having happened to him, and although I valued most highly every word he uttered, I purposely spoke as if I thought very little of it. In spite of this I never detected the slightest movement of displeasure; but on the contrary, he showed me the greatest marks of friendship and esteem. Neither, I am certain, did any one else ever hear him make any, even the slightest, complaint about my freedom in this matter.

"In fact I carried my caution so far, that, although I certainly entertained the utmost veneration for him, still, through an unnecessary fear of tempting him to vain-glory, I did not dare in his last illness simply to ask him in a straightforward way to pray for me when he had entered heaven. Instead of that I spoke in some such words as these: 'Put all your trust, Father, in the mercy of our Redeemer Jesus Christ, in the intercession of the glorious Virgin, of our Father St. Dominic, and of all the saints, in



order that, though your own merits are few, the blood of Christ may supply whatever is wanting, and that you may be saved. All the Fathers also of this convent, among whom are special servants of God, will pray for you, that you may be quickly delivered from purgatory if you should go there. But when it shall please God to take you into heaven, remember to pray for this convent and for me who have ever been more than your son !' Then did he reply, 'O Father, what do you say? Do you ask me to pray for you, if God through His mercy should give me Paradise? Indeed, most heartily will I !' 'Therefore, O Father Lewis,' continues Antist, 'now that thou art in heaven remember thy promise, pray that we may have the grace to become true sons and imitators of St. Dominic; forgive also the boldness with which I spoke to thee, for now in the Divine presence it will be given thee to know that it partly arose from vain fear, partly from true love to thee!'"

Nothing in point of fact more delighted the Saint than remarks of the nature made by Father Antist, warning him to beware of the devil's deceit, for these things tended towards humiliation. From whatever source a warning or reproof might come, he received it with equal satisfaction. For example, when on one occasion he had related certain things made known to him by revelation to Jerome Baptist de Nuza, afterwards Bishop of Albarazin, this prudent Father, instead of showing interest or curiosity, dryly remarked, "Take heed, Father, not to make the mistake of believing the wanderings of your own mind to be revelations from God." Instead of showing the slightest annoyance, the Saint received the admonition in humble silence.

It is the custom, in the Dominican churches, to carry the Blessed Sacrament in solemn procession very early on Easter Sunday morning, from the private altar where our Lord has been reserved since Good Friday, into the public church. Our Lord thus solemnly returning to the church,

after the desolation of the empty tabernacle on Friday and Saturday, is a touching symbol of His glorious resurrection. On Easter morning in the year 1579, after assisting with great devotion at this procession, St. Lewis returned to his cell where a heavenly vision was vouchsafed to him for his consolation. He did not clearly express in what it consisted, but spoke to one of the religious of the wonderful beauty of what he had seen. It had filled his soul with overflowing joy. He also pointed towards the Franciscan convent of the name of Jesus where the procession of the Blessed Sacrament had also taken place, and spoke of a multitude of most beautiful birds, which had come from there. Probably he had been favoured with a vision of angels. Visits of angels under the form of birds are not unfrequently met with in the lives of saints. We read of a number of lovely birds flying into the convent at the time of the death of St. Vincent Ferrer; also it is related of the Blessed Nicholas Factor, who dwelt in that very convent to which St. Lewis pointed, that "as he was once carrying the Blessed Sacrament in procession, a flight of birds formed a crown over the canopy, singing melodiously, their warbling notes harmonising beautifully with the chant. Blessed Nicholas being afterwards asked what these birds were, answered with a smile, that they were angels come down from heaven to honour their Divine King."

On another Easter Day, we are not told in what year, St. Lewis was favoured by a most striking vision, which was one of the means by which God was pleased to increase that gift of holy fear for the intensity of which he is distinguished even among the saints. It rests on the authority of Father Peter of Salamanca, the same religious to whom Lewis so distinctly prophesied his own death. Father Peter had requested Lewis to tell him, for the instruction of his own soul, some spiritual favour which he had received from God. "On the Festival of the Resurrection of our Lord, as I was

in the choir alone at night, having risen before the rest of the community, a sudden terror seized me. It was given me to see the Lord in such majesty, that compared to Him the whole world appeared nothing." How vividly this recalls the vision of the prophet Isaias (vi. 1)—"I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and elevated," and of that mystical vision of St. John, of—"one like to the Son of Man; . . . and when I had seen Him, I fell at His feet as dead" (Apoc. i. 13, 17).

Another remarkable instance of the spiritual vision of distant things is related as taking place in September 1579. The Duke of Nagara having paid him a visit at the convent, St. Lewis, in the midst of the conversation, suddenly asked after the health of Philip II., at that time King of Spain. "He is in excellent health," replied the Duke. "By no means," answered Lewis; "on the contrary, he has fallen seriously ill. We ought to pray for his recovery." A messenger from the court arrived three days afterwards at the house of the Duke, stating that the king was dangerously ill.

Violante Juncar was during the same year seized with fever. The doctors bled her seven times, and then, not unnaturally, recommended her to prepare at once for the last Sacraments. Happily she sent for the blessed Father, who was her confessor; and visiting her in the course of the day he found her scarcely able to speak from weakness. Raising his eyes to heaven, he remained for a time in earnest prayer. Then he spoke cheerfully to the poor sufferer, bidding her to take courage, for God would help her. To the question of when the holy Viaticum should be administered, he replied that she would soon be able to hear Mass and receive Holy Communion. From that moment she speedily regained her strength.

On the Festival of St. Michael (1579) Lewis preached a remarkable sermon, mentioned by Father Antist, in which

he explained his own opinion on several important practical matters, on which he could speak with all the authority of long and varied experience, as well as of approved sanctity. He advocated among other things the most complete liberty being accorded the faithful to select their confessors, strongly deprecating any influence being used to induce them to confess to the Fathers of his own or any other Order. It rejoiced him much when he saw that confessors were indifferent to all human considerations, being equally willing to hear the confessions of the poor and ignorant as of those penitents who, on account of better education, were naturally more attractive. He expressed his entire disapprobation of any class of persons being constrained by those in authority over them to confess to any particular priest, desiring all to be left at liberty to choose for themselves. This he applied to children, servants, and others in a dependent position, forcibly pointing out the danger of bad confessions, if this wholesome liberty were restrained. Moreover, he disapproved of confessors frequenting the houses of their penitents, as many inconveniences and abuses might be the effect of such a custom.

These valuable instructions, to which he added many others not recorded, were faithfully reduced to practice by the Saint himself. He received all who came to confession with equal charity, but he never tried to induce people to make their confessions to him in preference to other priests. In fact, he united intense zeal and paternal interest in the souls of others, with extreme detachment from all merely earthly considerations.

On this same Festival of St. Michael he was favoured with a very extraordinary vision, the details of which we happily possess on his own unimpeachable authority. Two or three days before the Feast of St. Francis he was visiting at the house of Salzedo, to whom, as being in high office in the kingdom of Valencia, he was sometimes accustomed to

apply on behalf of the poor. The conversation happened to turn upon the approaching Feast of St. Francis and the holiness of that Seraphic Patriarch. In the course of the conversation St. Lewis said, "I know for certain that last Michaelmas Day a religious of our Order was favoured with a vision of St. Francis. Matins were being chanted. This religious left the choir just before the 'Te Deum' had been entoned, when lo ! as he was passing through the cloister the Patriarch St. Francis, in company with the holy Father St. Dominic, appeared to him standing together. The religious, prostrating himself before them, kissed with the utmost devotion the right foot of St. Francis, while for a considerable time he was allowed to gaze with rapturous delight on that mark of God's love, the wound in his stigmatised foot. After a time the blessed St. Francis raised the head of the prostrate religious with both his pierced hands, gently stroking it as a sign of affection, while at the same time there was an expression on his countenance that gave the religious an assured hope of his own everlasting salvation. The religious then turning to St. Dominic endeavoured to kiss his feet, but this the holy Father would by no means allow; the most he would permit was that the religious should kiss his hand, which he did with reverent love."

From the manner in which St. Lewis related this vision, as well as from his well-known sanctity, Salzedo felt convinced that the highly-favoured religious was none other than Lewis himself. He much wished to have this impression confirmed, but not presuming to ask a direct question he put it thus : "May I ask, my dear Father, how it is that this religious, after so many marks of the Divine favour, always looks so melancholy?"

"For that very reason," replied the Saint, "he is more sad." By this answer Lewis no doubt meant that in proportion to the vividness of his realisation of the glory of heaven, his exile in this vale of tears became more tedious

and penitential, in the spirit of that exclamation of David, "My soul has thirsted after the strong living God ; when shall I come and appear before the face of God" (Ps. xli. 2), and of St. Paul, "Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death ?" (Rom. vii. 24).

On the corridor outside the room in which the Saint was conversing with Salzedo there was an altar, upon which stood an image of St. Francis. On leaving the room Lewis paused before this altar, speaking to himself in a low tone. Salzedo, however, who was standing behind him, managed to catch these words, "Well, it is very like him." This very strongly confirmed the idea that the vision of St. Francis was vouchsafed to St. Lewis himself. But shortly afterwards all doubt was removed. Salzedo related what he had heard to the Archbishop of Valencia, who was on terms of intimate friendship with St. Lewis ; the archbishop therefore put the question to Lewis so authoritatively that there was no escape. "I desire you to inform me, Father, whether you were the religious to whom the vision of St. Francis was granted." The reply was humble but without hesitation, "I saw him as distinctly as I now see your lordship."

According to the remark of Salzedo, as the reader will be by this time aware, there was usually a certain shade of melancholy on the countenance of St. Lewis. He had not certainly the bright cheerful look which we associate with our idea of St. Philip Neri or St. Francis of Sales. This was caused in a measure perhaps by natural disposition, while it was no doubt greatly owing to the constant ill health under which he suffered, as well as being the effect to some extent of more spiritual causes. Sometimes when he had reason to fear that this preoccupied look and appearance of sadness had disedified others, he would hasten at once to beg their pardon with great humility. This he did with graceful condescension, even when he was superior,

to his own subjects, but with such genuine humility, that it never compromised his position, but rather increased the respect in which he was held.

But his face did not always wear that touching look of gentle sadness, for we must not for a moment imagine him to have been morose. There was nothing sour or repulsive in his sadness. Sometimes also his face was radiant with the spiritual joy of his soul. Salzedo himself being one day struck by the peculiarly joyful appearance of his holy friend, asked him what had happened to light up his countenance with such evident gladness. "O my friend," answered Lewis, "God was pleased to-day to bestow a singular grace upon me. A little before daybreak this morning, the window of my cell being open, I had a vision of our Blessed Redeemer on the Cross, as on Mount Calvary. This vision has filled my soul with heavenly consolation."

During the course of this year (1579) St. Lewis lost a very dear friend, Father Bartholomew de la Costa, who for some time had been his confessor. His death was, as his life had been, one of singular holiness. On the day after his departure, Father Antonio Ballester spoke of him to St. Lewis. The Saint said, "This morning, as I was sitting here on this seat, words full of comfort sounded in my ears." He did not explain more definitely what he had heard, but there is little doubt from the circumstances that he was assured of the salvation of Father Bartholomew.

In November of the same year he was able to console a lady named Dorothy Garzia with that supernatural knowledge of distant and future events so often noticed. She was in great anxiety of mind about her husband Christopher Perez de Almazan, who was in Sicily, because for a considerable time she had received no intelligence of him. In her distress she came to beg the Saint's prayers, but before she could utter a word he greeted her thus, "Pray for your husband, madam, for he is in sore need of help."

"O Father," replied the lady, "is he dead? Tell me whether he is dead!" "No," said Lewis, "he is alive; moreover, he will return safe and well to Valencia, but at present he greatly needs assistance." About a month later the lady received letters from her husband relating how on a voyage to Naples he had been in imminent peril of falling into the hands of some Moorish pirates. After he had escaped that danger, he very nearly lost his life in a tempest of great violence. From the date of the letter giving these details, it was evident that he had escaped these dangers at the very time in which St. Lewis had prophesied his safe return. In due time he arrived safely in Valencia, and some years after, being left a widower, he entered the Society of Jesus.

Another remarkable instance of the gift of prophecy happened in the same year. During January, Alphonsus Palombo, a member of the household of the Viceroy of Valencia, the Duke of Nagara, seeing the copious rain that was falling, remarked to St. Lewis that the weather gave promise of a good harvest. "Yet in spite of this fair promise," answered the holy Father, "the harvest will be very scanty this year, on account of the sins committed in this city." Notwithstanding the reputation of the Saint for prophetic knowledge, Alphonsus doubted the truth of this prediction, as the weather still continued favourable both for corn and for the vineyards. But the event proved the accuracy of the prophecy, for the wheat crop was very light owing to want of rain in April, while a great part of the vintage was destroyed by floods in September.\*

Alphonsus Palombo, to whom this prophecy was made,

\* The river Turia, called by the Moors the Guadalaviar on account of the shallow current, is scarcely two or three feet deep during seven months of the year. But in flood times it swells to a large extent; sometimes the whole Huerta and the low lying parts of the city are inundated.



had reason to trust St. Lewis, for he had already received a special favour through his prayers. For many years his marriage had been fruitless. As this was a grievous affliction to his wife as well as to himself, they had recourse to St. Lewis, the refuge of all in distress. The holy man sympathised much with them, though he exhorted them to resign themselves entirely to God's providence ; but he gave them at the same time a special blessing, promising his prayers. During the following Lent God comforted them by the birth of a son.

The Saint, who had a tender compassion for every kind of sorrow, came to the assistance of Don James Ferrer, the governor of the kingdom of Valencia, in a time of deep anxiety. Some years before, a case containing documents of extreme importance having been committed to his safe keeping, now, in November 1580, the Duke of Nagara, the Viceroy of Valencia, demanded a copy of two papers that ought to have been in the casket. These papers were missing ; nowhere could they be discovered. Don James was in the utmost distress, fearing the worst consequences, besides the injury to his reputation involved in losing documents of such value. Before the loss had become publicly known he had recourse to St. Lewis, who encouraged him greatly to hope that prayer would discover the missing papers. He recommended him to recite fervently the Magnificat nine times every day in honour of the nine months during which our Divine Lord reposed in the virginal womb of His ever-blessed Mother, promising at the same time to pray earnestly for his intention. The very next day, while Ferrer was reciting the prescribed prayers, a clerk brought him the documents for which they had been so long fruitlessly searching. He went at once in the utmost joy to thank St. Lewis, whom he found standing in the cloister with Father Suarez, but before he had time to speak the Saint exclaimed, " Here comes Señor Ferrer, who has recovered the lost papers ! "


## CHAPTER VI.

### LETTER REGARDING THE MOORS.—1579.

Lewis consulted by the Viceroy—Disturbances in 1519—Cortes of Valencia and Charles V.—Revolution against the Nobles—Baptism of the Moors—Suppression of the Rebellion—Validity of the Baptism—How to judge the Saint's Advice—Letter of St. Lewis to the Viceroy.

"A wise judge shall judge his people, and the government of a prudent man shall be steady."—ECCLUS. x. 1.

"The children of the stranger that adhere to the Lord, to worship Him and to love His Name, to be His servants; . . . I will bring them into My holy mount and will make them joyful in My house of prayer."  
—ISAIAH lvi. 6, 7.

N December 1579 St. Lewis was consulted by the Viceroy, the Duke of Nagara, in reference to certain affairs of difficulty and importance concerning the Moorish population of the kingdom, arising out of the rebellion of the lower classes against the nobles in 1519. Rightly to understand the letter written on this occasion by the Saint, it will be necessary to enter into a short explanation of the peculiar circumstances which had given rise to the difficulty.

In 1519, seven years before the birth of St. Lewis, the kingdom of Valencia was disturbed by violent tumults occasioned by the tyranny and exactions of the nobles. On the 28th of June in the same year Charles V. had been elected Emperor of Germany by the unanimous vote of the electoral body. As this new dignity would require the

Emperor to live out of Spain and to govern by regents, the election was most unpopular throughout the country. This feeling prevailed in Valencia as elsewhere, especially among the noble classes. The Cortes of Valencia finding that Charles V., in order to repair at once to Germany for his coronation, was unable to preside over their assembly in person, determined to rebel against his authority, and declined to accept the Cardinal Adrian as his representative. They declared, moreover, that the laws of their kingdom forbade them to acknowledge any sovereign who was not present in person among them. These proceedings so deeply incensed the young Emperor against them, that when he received deputations from the popular party against the nobles, he at once favoured their views and sanctioned them in their revolt. The people therefore under so powerful a protection saw the dawn of their liberties, and forming themselves into a confederacy called the Germanada or brotherhood, succeeded in expelling the nobles from the city and appointed a government from their own body. The Valencian historian Bleda \* draws a terrible picture of the confusion and anarchy that now ensued. The Emperor had left Spain. The revolutionary party led on by the lowest of the people indulged in all the usual excesses of victorious mobs. Houses and property were consigned to the flames; 14,000 men were killed in encounters between the hostile parties, and many more fell victims to disease and hunger consequent on the disordered state of affairs. The nobles all fled or were expelled from the city. Bleda praises the Marquis Zeneti as the only man who possessed the skill and courage to oppose the extreme measures of the popular leaders; but for him the city would have been burnt.

\* *Defensio Fidei in causa Neophytorum sive Morischorum Regni Valentiae* auctore P. F. Jacobo Bleda Valentino, Prædicatore Gen. Ord. Præd., Valentiae, 1610.

Amongst other extravagant measures there was one strongly characteristic of the times and people. The revolutionary government issued a proclamation in many places, but especially in the Duchy of Gandia and in the marchionate of Lombay, commanding all Mahometans to consent to receive baptism under pain of death. In many mosques also the sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated by command of the same lawless authority. The Moors, frightened by the threats of the government, received baptism in large numbers, and had their children baptized.

In 1522 the Emperor returned to Spain to suppress the insurrections against his authority, which had broken out in many parts of the country, but was too much occupied in restoring order in Castile to be able to appear in person in Valencia, where the tumult was rather against the nobles than directed against his sovereignty. But his authority was well represented by the Viceroy Diego Hurtado, Count of Melito, who at last succeeded after strenuous efforts in putting down the rebellion and restoring peace in the kingdom. His prudence and dexterity at last prevailed, and everything was arranged once more according to law.

Then arose the difficult question as to the Mahometans who had received baptism in consequence of the proclamation of the revolutionary government. The whole question depended on the one point of the validity of the baptism administered under such extraordinary circumstances. The matter was thoroughly examined by commissions of theologians and canonists, the conclusion being, that the baptism must be considered valid, as sufficient consent had been given. As to the children, no objection could be advanced; their baptism was valid beyond all question. Orders were therefore issued by the spiritual and temporal authorities, that the baptized Moors were to be confirmed, and must live as Christians, in conformity to the laws of the Church. The mosques in which Mass had been celebrated were

ordered to be closed until they had been purified and transformed into Christian churches. This was in 1525, and still in 1579 the affair was causing considerable scandal, and the government was in perplexity as to the most prudent way of treating these half-Christianised Moors. Harsh measures had not been employed to enforce obedience, owing to the abnormal circumstances of their baptism, and yet their conduct was causing public scandal.

In this serious and complicated difficulty the Viceroy consulted St. Lewis as to the course it was the duty of the government to adopt, and his answer, written in Spanish, is given in a work on the "Moors of Spain" by Fonseca.\* The original was preserved, till the dissolution, in the archives of the convent of St. Dominic in the Saint's handwriting, or at least with his autograph signature.

To estimate his advice rightly we must endeavour to judge it not according to the ideas prevalent at the present day, when unity of faith and obedience to its principles are no longer considered matters of public importance, but we must regard it in the light of the feeling universal in Spain as elsewhere three hundred years ago, when religious unity and submission to the principles of faith were looked upon by every one as things of the highest value. Estimated in this way the counsel of St. Lewis will be found remarkable for its mild and gentle character. The fact of a large body of persons, nominally, at least, Christians, yet living in open disobedience to the principles of the Christian faith, was at that time a cause of grave and public scandal.

It may indeed occur to some that the best advice would have been to recommend the Viceroy to ignore the whole subject, as not appertaining to his jurisdiction; in fact, to allow the Moors to keep the Christian law or not, accord-

\* *Justa expulsion de los Moriscos de Espana.* Del M. F. Fonseca de la Orden de Predicadores.—Roma, 1612.

ing to their own pleasure. But this is to judge the matter according to the ideas common in a country in which the very notion of unity and of obedience to faith is extinct. At that time this line of conduct would have appeared to every one as a scandalous neglect of duty. It was universally considered an essential part of the office of the civil power to enforce obedience to the laws of God's Church, to suppress sacrilege and heresy as crimes against society, as well as sin against God, and to tolerate rebellion against the laws of the Church as little as against the State.

MOST ILLUSTRIOUS AND EXCELLENT LORD,—After having commended the case of the newly-converted Christians of this kingdom to our Lord, it appears to me that, considering in the first place the great hardness of heart which they display, since nearly all (and may God grant that it be not quite all!) are heretics and—what is worse even—apostates; considering that they clearly show the hatred they entertain for the Christian religion, and observe the ceremonies of Mahomet as far as they are able (for example, every one who does not wilfully shut his eyes can see that they keep not the Christian Lent but the fast prescribed by the Koran); considering also that if any child desires to learn the Christian religion, they immediately carry it away and pervert its mind to prevent it becoming a good Christian; considering, lastly, that during all these years, upwards of fifty, since they received baptism, no progress has been made in gaining them by the way of kindness and indulgence; I give it as my opinion that the authorities, secular and ecclesiastical, are bound in conscience to adopt one of two possible remedies for the existing scandalous state of things.

The first alternative is to oblige them to adhere to the faith of Jesus Christ, and to renounce the sect of Mahomet by the way of severity and punishment. For what is urged

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as an excuse for their conduct is not valid, namely, that they received baptism by force during the disturbances. This was certainly not well done; indeed, would to God no such order had ever been given! and we see by this case most clearly how much better it is to follow the custom of the Church so well explained by St. Thomas. Still it must be remembered that many of those who thus received baptism because they were obliged, did consent at least in some measure, and so in reality received a valid baptism. Besides, of those Moors who are still alive, nineteen out of every twenty received baptism as children, and so, as the Church has decided, can be compelled to keep to the faith of Jesus Christ, just as others who have always been Christians. Still it would seem right to punish them less severely, at least for some years, than those who had always been Christians. But especially it is expedient that they should be prohibited from using the Arabic language, for, from its use arises the great difficulty of converting the children and women, since they cannot understand the preachers and confessors. This inconvenience might be remedied by commanding that no Moor entering any city, town, or village of the Christians in this kingdom, should speak in the Arabic tongue, that the women should not be allowed to marry till they have learnt the Christian Catechism, and that on Sundays and holidays when they go to church, any man or woman who had used the Arabic language should pay a small fine. Other things of a like kind might also be ordained.

In case it is considered that the things I have suggested are impracticable, the second remedy I would propose is, that baptism be no longer administered to the children of these Moors if they are to remain with their parents, for it is perfectly evident that the consequence will be that they also will become apostates like their parents. It is better that they should never have been anything but Mahome-

tans than that they should become wilful heretics or apostates. It is therefore as intrinsically wrong to baptize these children, unless they are in danger of death, considering all that I have said, as it would be if a man were to baptize the children of Saracens beyond the sea, and then were to leave them with their infidel parents foreseeing that their parents would pervert them, even if their parents had for some motive allowed them to be baptized. But it is manifest on the face of it that a Christian acting thus would sin mortally, not because he would violate the rights of the parents, for their consent is supposed, but on account of the injury to the Sacrament and to the Faith.

Therefore I think the best plan would be for the King to command that this whole affair should be clearly and distinctly laid before the Vicar of Jesus Christ, that his Holiness may determine what course should be pursued, and what should be done to put an end to the many blasphemous outrages now committed against God. Then we may hope that the anger of God may be averted from us, and that we may not be afflicted so heavily by the scourges of sterility and famine which have so often fallen on the kingdom.

This is the counsel which, under correction of Holy Mother Church, it appears good to me to offer to your Excellency. Some learned Fathers of this convent, whom I have consulted, agree with me. May the Lord grant that in this matter, as well as in all others, your Excellency may have the grace to do, with the King, everything that is best for the service of our Lord.

FROM THE CONVENT OF THE PREACHERS,  
*Valencia, 30th day of December 1579.*



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE YEAR BEFORE DEPARTURE.—1580.

Lewis preaches Lent at Xativa—Revival of Strength—A Dangerous Journey  
—Frequent Communion—Cure of two Ladies—Feast of the Assumption  
—Prophesies his own Death—Canon Vich—How are things Revealed?  
—Gift of Prophecy—Instances—Three Religious—Image of our Lady  
—Other Examples—Help to Don Cosmo Clemente.

"And I said, Ah, Ah, Ah, Lord God ; behold I cannot speak, for I am a child. And the Lord said to me : Say not, I am a child ; for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee : and whatsoever I shall command thee, thou shalt speak."—JEREMIAS i. 6, 7.

"They shall know that there hath been a prophet in the midst of them."  
—EZECHIEL ii. 5.

**A**S the Lent of the year 1580 approached, the weakness of the holy Father increased so rapidly that he appeared unequal to the slightest exertion. His sight and hearing became still more imperfect, the lameness caused by the ulcer in his leg was such as to render any exercise most painful and difficult ; his whole constitution, in fact, was completely broken by his long sustained labours and sufferings : but God, who brings strength out of weakness, had still some work for His faithful servant before taking him into the eternal rest for which he so ardently longed.

A special messenger arrived at the convent to invite Lewis, in the name of the Magistrates of Xativa, to preach the Lenten sermons in their town. This is the town now called San Felipe. St. Lewis, though as anxious to labour

for the salvation of souls as he had ever been, even if possible more so, because he knew his time for doing good was short, and his end approaching, felt obliged to excuse himself as incapable of so arduous a work in his present state of extreme weakness. This answer had been anticipated. The messenger, therefore, had orders to urge the holy missionary by every possible argument not to disappoint the earnest desire of all the inhabitants of Xativa. He was instructed to say that, knowing the suffering state of his health, they would be content if he would only appear once in their pulpit, in case he felt incapable of greater exertion. They were wise enough to feel that his very presence in the town would have an influence for good, in fact, that it would bring a blessing upon all that dwelt there; they were convinced, moreover, that one sermon from so holy a man would effect more than a whole course delivered by an ordinary preacher. They knew also that this was their last possible opportunity, so that they pleaded most earnestly for the coveted favour.

Ill and suffering as he was, Lewis could not refuse such hearty petitions. After prayer to discover God's will, he sacrificed his own feelings by consenting to undertake the work. "But," he added, "I fear that I shall not have strength to preach three sermons."

Great were the rejoicings of the good citizens of Xativa; clergy and people with one accord united to give the Apostolic Preacher a hearty welcome on his arrival. With much exertion he preached the opening sermon with his usual simple zeal and unction, then God in reward for his self-sacrifice strengthened him so much, that, contrary to all expectation, he was able to preach every day of Lent without omitting a single sermon; on one day he even preached twice. We are left to imagine the spiritual effect of these sermons, but we may conclude that many permanent conversions must have resulted. Self-sacrifice so

heroic would certainly ensure the most powerful graces from God.

While Lewis was thus engaged in his last missionary work, Father Antist arrived in Xativa to beg his blessing before starting on a journey to Rome. He was exceedingly unwilling to undertake the voyage, but the business he had to transact being urgent, St. Lewis encouraged him, begging him also to manage certain affairs for him in the Holy City.

Fortified with the blessing of St. Lewis, and relying upon the efficacy of the prayers he promised, Father Antist summoned courage to start upon the long journey he so much dreaded, but which would have alarmed him still more if he could have foreseen the sufferings it actually entailed. He embarked at Alicante, but hardly had they cleared the harbour before it became evident that their vessel was an utterly unseaworthy craft. A leak that was soon discovered increased to such an extent that Father Antist considered their arrival at last safe in Leghorn as little short of miraculous. He attributed it entirely to the prayers of St. Lewis, whose virtues and miracles he related during the voyage to certain students from the university of Salamanca who were his fellow-passengers. They all implored Almighty God to bring them safely to land, through the merits and prayers of His servant.

Father Antist was successful in the object of his mission to Rome, where Gregory XIII. was then reigning as Supreme Pontiff. After transacting all his business affairs he returned to Leghorn to re-embark for the homeward voyage. He did not reach Valencia easily, indeed he complains pathetically of the dangers that surrounded him. "Although," he writes, "I have suffered much during other journeys, yet never did I endure the hardships that I encountered in this one."

A storm of extreme violence raged for six days, during which another vessel that had lost its rudder and was completely unmanageable bore down upon them, almost causing

a fatal collision. On the next day, they were twice struck by lightning within a quarter of an hour. The first time there was serious alarm lest the powder on board should explode, while the effect of the second was to set fire to the mast, which was so much injured before the flames could be extinguished as to be entirely useless. The tempest was still at its height, while deprived of their mast they were tossed about at the mercy of the waves, expecting every moment that the vessel would founder. "In the midst of these terrible dangers," writes Father Antist, "besides invoking the glorious Virgin Mary, St. Raymund of Pennafort, who crossed the sea from Majorca to Barcelona on his monastic cloak, and blessed Peter Gonzalez, with my other patrons, I also recommended myself to Father Lewis, in order that I might get safely out of this unlucky craft."\*

\* St. Raymund of Pennafort, mentioned by Father Antist, was the third general of the Order of St. Dominic. To escape from James, king of Aragon, he crossed the sea from the island of Majorca to Barcelona in six hours, kneeling on his cappa, the black cloak of the Friar Preachers. This miracle was witnessed by a multitude. On arriving at Barcelona, putting on his cappa, which was perfectly dry, he quietly entered the convent of his Order. He died, a centenarian, in 1275, and was canonised by Clement VIII.

Curiously enough the Bollandist editor of Father Antist's life had never heard of Blessed Peter Gonzalez, or Santo Telmo, as he is often popularly called, and wonders whether St. Peter Martyr is intended. This mistake is corrected in the volume of additions to the October lives. Blessed Peter Gonzalez, by no means to be confused with St. Peter Martyr, is a well-known patron of sailors—who invoked him under the title of "St. Telmo." He flourished in the thirteenth century, and was a native of Spain. Endowed with good abilities he made rapid progress as a youth in philosophy, and entering the clerical state was promoted by his uncle, the Bishop of Palencia, to be a Canon of that church. He carried the spirit of the world into the Church, loving the vanities of riches and honours rather than the poverty of Christ. God converted him by allowing him to be thrown from his prancing and gaily caparisoned horse into a heap of foul mud, which excited great ridicule among the bystanders. Stung to the quick by his humiliation, he was wise enough to open his eyes to the vanity of worldly honours, and retired into the Order

The labour of preaching the Lent at Xativa appeared rather to revive the strength of St. Lewis, than to exhaust him, as every one had feared. When the Easter season arrived he was in hopes that his strength would permit him to return to Valencia on foot, but to this exertion he was obliged to acknowledge himself unequal.

The first incident after he had once more reached home is supplied by a lady named Frances Garcia, sister of that Dorothy Garcia, the safety of whose husband St. Lewis had already predicted. Frances, having an earnest desire to lead a devout life, felt inspired to receive Holy Communion frequently, but conscious of her unworthiness she hesitated to do so, without certainly ascertaining the Divine will. She consulted many confessors on this point. Perhaps she received different answers, for her scruples were not quieted, so that she determined to seek the advice of St. Lewis. On her approach to the confessional, before she had time to speak, the holy Father said, "In this matter I am accustomed to be very free ; I always exhort persons who have a genuine desire to serve God to go to Holy Communion very frequently." This entirely satisfied her mind : from that time she persevered in receiving the blessed Eucharist several times each week, to the great profit of her soul. We need not wonder at the hesitation of this good lady, when we read of St. Teresa that, after she had become a Carmelite nun, it required the persuasion of the Dominican Father Vincent Barron to induce her to communicate once every fortnight. Her words are :

of St. Dominic, where giving himself wholly to God he became a Saint. Full of apostolic fervour he evangelised several provinces in Spain, converting innumerable sinners. He was celebrated for miraculous power ; invoked during his life by some sailors in a tempest, he appeared and calmed the sea ; after his holy death the fame of his miracles spreading far and wide, he became a favourite patron of sailors. Benedict XIV. ordered his feast to be celebrated by the Dominican Order and the clergy of Palencia on the 14th of April.

"This Dominican Father, who was a very good man, fearing God, did me a very great service ; for I confessed to him. He took upon himself the task of helping my soul in earnest. He sent me to communion once a fortnight." \* At the beginning of the sixteenth century the practice of frequent communion had fallen into lamentable disuse, and St. Lewis was one of the many saints by whom it was restored. He often compared the soul of the frequent communicant to a ship driven through the waters by a favourable wind, earnestly exhorting those who could not often actually receive the Blessed Sacrament, at least to make daily visits of adoration before the tabernacle with spiritual communion.

During May of the same year (1580) St. Lewis wrought a double miracle at the request of his holy friend blessed Nicholas Factor. A lady named Mary Boilla and her daughter were both very seriously ill ; their sufferings were acute. Martin Folches, the son of the elder lady, called at the Franciscan monastery of Jesus and Mary to beg the prayers of blessed Nicholas by whom so many sick had been cured. Father Nicholas directed the young man to go to Father Lewis Bertrand ; to implore him in the Name of God and His Holy Mother to visit the two sufferers, taking with him some sacred relics. Lewis, unable to disregard such a request from a religious whose sanctity he so highly revered, visited the sick ladies the next day ; and after reciting some prayers he laid his hand on their heads, giving them both instant relief. From that moment they rapidly recovered. Not long afterwards, when another member of the same family, a brother of Don Martin, was suffering intense pain from a wound caused by a surgical operation, he felt not unnaturally more confidence in St. Lewis than in the doctors. The Saint,

after earnest prayer, applied the relics of St. Vincent to the wound, made the sign of the cross, and the patient was suddenly healed.

On the Festival of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady in the same year, 1580, as St. Lewis was preparing to assist in the procession which takes place in Dominican churches on that day, he was summoned in haste to visit Doña Isabella Vaziero, a lady of rank, wife of Jerome Pascal, who held important office in the kingdom of Valencia. He found the lady in so prostrate a condition after one of the paroxysms of a dangerous fever, that it was actually doubted whether she had not already expired. The servant of God calmly entered the sick-room, reassuring the weeping family by his very presence, then placing his hand on the lady's head he read a gospel, giving his accustomed blessing for the sick.\* After this he raised his eyes in silence towards heaven, standing for some time motionless, rapt in ecstasy. On returning to his ordinary state, he said to those present, "Rejoice, for the holy Mother of God, whose festival we are to-day celebrating, has granted the favour we have asked. The lady will not die."

Then sitting down he discoursed most devoutly for a short while in praise of the Blessed Virgin, but the patient gave no sign of consciousness. Hardly, however, had the holy Father departed, than she suddenly revived with the exclamation, "Father, Father, for the love of God return." Again approaching the bed he placed his hand once more on the aching and fevered brow, alleviating the pain by his touch. After he had left the house the sick woman began to lament that she had been unable to speak to so great a Saint who had honoured her with a visit. Confident hopes of her recovery were now entertained, but the next day brought so severe an accession of the fever that she appeared

\* See this blessing in Appendix B.

to sink again to the very point of death, so that some of the family began to distrust the prediction of the Saint. But in a short time all remaining doubt was removed by her complete recovery.

This lady belonged to a favoured family. Not long after her own cure, her father Don Francis Vaziero was taken dangerously ill, but his recovery was foretold by the Saint. Not only did he recover, but at the time Father Antist wrote, both the father and daughter were still living. Nor was this all. In November St. Lewis was entreated to visit another member of the same family, Vincent Vaziero, the son of Don Francis. On entering the sick-room he said at once, "My brother, be of good cheer, God wills to take you out of this world." After some prayers to prepare Vincent for his death, Lewis said to the mother, "Do not repine if God sees good to take this son away from you." After two months' illness Vincent, thus warned of his approaching end, died a holy death.

On the eve of the Festival of St. Dionysius and his companions, that is on the 8th of October 1580, St. Lewis distinctly prophesied that his own death would take place on the Festival of these martyrs in the next year. Father Peter of Salamanca, a master in theology, is the authority for this remarkable prophecy. It is circumstantially related by Father Antist, who as he was living in the convent at the time, doubtless heard it from Father Peter himself. The Saint having been commanded to visit a criminal who was condemned to death, was distressed, as the case was one of difficulty, that some other Father more likely, as his humility suggested, to be of use to the poor man, had not been selected. Father Peter, whom the Prior had appointed as his companion on this mission of charity, solemnly declared that as they passed together from the great cloister of the convent to the lesser on their way out, the Saint said, "Father Master, mark this day well; and remember



what I now say : On this day next year I shall die." Father Antist here remarks, "This prophecy was fulfilled. For although he said these words not on the actual feast, but on the eve of St. Dionysius, still he intended to speak of the festival itself ; and on another occasion, speaking likewise of his death, he so clearly pointed out this same day, that for some months before the event happened it was publicly reported in Valencia that he would die on the Festival of St. Dionysius."

Amongst others the Carthusian Father Laurence Zamora, Prior of the convent of Portacoeli, hearing from the Archbishop of Valencia that St. Lewis had foretold the day of his departure, and wishing to test the accuracy of the prophecy, on his return to his monastery wrote on a sheet of paper these words—

#### A REVELATION.

*In the year 1581, on the Feast of St. Dionysius, Friar Lewis Bertrand dies.*

Then carefully folding this paper, he sealed it with the conventual seal, writing outside—"A secret to be opened on the Feast of All Saints, 1581." Without disclosing the contents of this paper to any one, he deposited it in the strong room of the community, forbidding any one to open it without his permission. After the Saint's death the Prior summoned the community, and unfolding the paper in their presence, read the prophecy that they had already seen fulfilled. All were filled with wonder, for they perfectly well knew that the paper had been written a long time before.

Just before Christmas 1580, he again distinctly prophesied that his death would take place within a year, though he does not appear to have mentioned the exact day it would occur. It happened during the early part of December that the Archbishop of Valencia, who has been already noticed as an intimate friend of the Saint, was stay-

ing at Torre, a healthy country place, whilst engaged in the visitation of his diocese. St. Lewis being at this time in a very suffering condition constantly secluded in his cell, the Archbishop thought that change of air with some relaxation from the duties of his ordinary life might benefit his health. He wrote a pressing invitation to the Saint, who accordingly passed some days at Torre, edifying the Patriarch extremely by his holy conversation. As one of the Canons of the cathedral chapter, Michael Vich, was lying seriously ill, the Archbishop requested St. Lewis, on his return to the city, to call at his house in order to console him in his sufferings. The Saint, not being acquainted with the Canon, was afraid of intruding, he therefore returned straight to the convent without calling. Before long the Canon became convalescent. In his joy at the improvement in his health, at one time little expected, he gave orders for a feast to be prepared that he might invite his friends at Christmas to congratulate with him on his recovery. All this was revealed to St. Lewis in prayer, while at the same time he saw the fast approaching death of Canon Vich. Remembering the Patriarch's request, he went at once to the Canon's house, introducing himself with these startling words, "Your Reverence ought at once to receive the Holy Sacraments, to dispose of your property, and to prepare for the next world. This, believe me, is no time for feasting, for before the festival of Christmas you will go to paradise." The solemn manner in which this warning was conveyed must have forcibly reminded the Canon of the words of Isaias, the son of Amos, to Ezechias : "Thus saith the Lord : Take order with thy house, for thou shalt die, and not live" (Isa. xxxviii. 1).

Well knowing that St. Lewis was a man full of prophetic spirit he was not unnaturally considerably overcome for the moment ; but the Saint, to console him, continued, "Fear nothing, be not disturbed by my words. I myself

shall pass into the other world before a year has passed." The Canon, convinced that he must bid farewell to this world, remained alone with the Saint for a considerable time conversing on spiritual matters, and after the holy man had departed, his attendants found him in prayer, striking his breast with great contrition, while he called on God for mercy. After arranging all worldly matters he spent all his time in prayer. Early in the morning of Christmas day he calmly expired.

It would be interesting to know by what means these things are communicated to the saints in prayer, with the clear certainty necessary for prophecy. So thought some of the Saint's fellow religious, for they ventured to ask him how he could foretell the death of the Canon. "I saw him lying dead in my cell," was the simple reply, which seemed for the moment sufficient explanation. But on talking it over, they wondered how the mere fact of seeing the Canon lying as if dead could enable the Saint to predict the actual day of his departure. A professed novice, Brother Antony, summoned courage to inquire from St. Lewis himself how this could be explained, but the answer was, "My son, it is enough for you to know that when God is pleased to reveal anything to our minds, He also bestows a grace by the light of which we understand for certain the meaning of what is revealed."

On another occasion, when he had been to Grao, the port of Valencia, while returning to the city he seemed to prophesy not only his death, but the glory which would then be his portion. He was in his usual suffering state, and probably his companion had made some reference to his infirmities, for he related that Lewis had said, "You see this poor deaf lame man, but let him die, then you will see what will happen." Then he added a truly terrible prediction in these words, "On the day of my death a certain other person will die a bad death." On the Feast of St.

Dionysius, 1581, the day of the holy man's departure, a certain man in Valencia died in a horrible state of despair, and doubtless it was to this sad event that the Saint alluded with prophetic foresight.

From these instances and numerous others it is evident that the prophetic gift was the one in which St. Lewis was specially eminent. He was very frequently illuminated with this extraordinary light, to know clearly both future and distant things. Not that this gift was constant. St. Thomas teaches very clearly that even the saints who have most excelled in prophecy do not always enjoy this supernatural light, but often use their own prudence, being led as ordinary persons are by considering the circumstances, as well as forming their judgment by hearing the evidence of others. Then they are manifestly open to error like other men. But it is curious to notice how a saint can sometimes see the future by prophetic light when no especial reason for such extraordinary help can be perceived. Not that no reason exists, but only that it is difficult to see the reason why this particular matter should be revealed.

As an instance, the following is related of St. Lewis, though no date is given to show at what period of his life it happened. Three religious, not belonging apparently to the Order of St. Dominic, having one day visited Valencia, two of them went to see St. Lewis, of whom they had probably heard wonderful things. After receiving them with his usual kindness he took them to the cell of St. Vincent Ferrer, bidding them wait for him there. Returning to his own cell he remained three hours in prayer, during which time they patiently waited his return. At last they were rewarded for their perseverance. He returned, sat down in St. Vincent's cell, placing one sitting on his right hand and one on his left. He first addressed the one on the right: "Father, you are Benjamin, that is 'the son of the

right hand' (Gen. xxxv. 18), and so your Prior is accustomed to call you." The religious was astonished to hear St. Lewis say this. It was true, but how the Saint could know it he could not explain. St. Lewis then proceeded to say, "Father, were there not three of you together?" "Perfectly true," they replied, "but the third did not wish to accompany us to this convent." "I should wish one of you," returned St. Lewis, "to take ink and paper in order to write down what I am now about to say." When all was prepared he began thus: "I see a tree with three branches. One, however much the tree is watered, will produce no fruit, so that it will be cut off and thrown aside as useless. The second branch will produce some fruit indeed, but bitter to the taste; it also will be cut away, already I see it in a sepulchre. The third will bear fruit sweet to the palate; that branch will remain on the tree." After he had uttered these prophetic words, like another Daniel, he charged the religious to keep them secret, using the words of Christ to His Apostles, "Tell the vision to no man, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (St. Matthew xvii. 9).

Then the two religious asked him whether it was true that the Image of the Blessed Virgin, which was preserved in that cell, had spoken to St. Vincent Ferrer? meaning of course that our Lady Herself had spoken apparently through the Image. Lewis answered that it was perfectly true, adding, "She has also spoken to another religious of this convent." When they said, "Perhaps, Father, you are that religious," the Saint replied, "I am not allowed to reveal the name of the religious."

The above prophecy was exactly fulfilled, as Father Antist testifies. One of the three religious not long afterwards losing his reason was obliged to be put under restraint. Another, although a good religious, was of a hard impetuous character; not very long afterwards he died. The third

was a man of special virtue, and, at the time Father Antist wrote, was still alive, a valuable subject in his religious Order.

Other interesting examples of this wonderful illumination took place in the case of a maiden lady, Raphaela Fernandez de Heredia. Her brother was absent in Naples, but although she usually received letters from him regularly every month, it was now a considerable time since any had reached her. At last she became seriously alarmed, fearing that some calamity had overtaken her brother. In her distress she bethought herself of St. Lewis. He spoke without hesitation, exhorting her to dispel all anxiety, for not only was her brother alive, but in a most prosperous condition. In fact, added the Saint, this very day a letter from him containing money will safely arrive. With her grief changed into intense joy the lady sought her home, where she determined to eat nothing until the arrival of the promised letter. At nine in the evening it was presented to her, containing some kind of order or letters of credit amounting to ninety scudi, giving at the same time the most cheering account of her brother. The same lady on another occasion petitioned the holy Father to say Mass for her intention. After hearing the Mass she felt dejected because she had no money to offer as an alms for the Mass, but the Saint said to her, "Be not troubled, I want no alms for that Mass." Clearly he had read her thoughts.

Again he one day inquired of an official connected with the Cathedral, how old he then was. After being told, he said, "Mark my words! you must take care to be very good, for many years of life still remain for you." When St. Lewis told him this the official was sixty-four, at the age of eighty-four he gave his testimony concerning the Saint.

A lady named Catherine Espina asked the Saint, who was her confessor, to celebrate three Masses for her on Christmas Day. "Willingly," replied Lewis, "but the alms you must keep yourself in order to buy yourself a pair of stock-

ings." Catherine was astonished, for though in much want she had revealed her poverty to no one. On another occasion she had been delighted at the gift of a Rosary from her holy confessor. A Franciscan Friar requested her to give the Rosary to him. She consented, but was deeply grieved. When next St. Lewis saw her, he at once asked why she was looking so sad. She refused to say ; but he replied with a smile, " Well then, I will cure your melancholy, I will give you another Rosary."

At the risk of tiring the reader one more example of peculiar interest must be related, as it took place during the Christmas of 1580, the last Christmas of the Saint on earth. A lady of Valencia had been for some days most dangerously ill in childbirth. On Christmas day her husband was greeted by the dreadful news that the doctors despaired of the poor lady's life, and had ordered the last Sacraments to be administered. Almost distracted with grief, the husband, Don Cosmo Clemente, determined to have recourse to the Saint who had so often brought relief to the suffering. He hastened to the church in order to secure the Saint's Mass for his wife ; but found to his disappointment that it was too late, for St. Lewis had already begun to celebrate on the high altar. Clemente then confided the cause of his distress to the father sacristan, who comforted him by explaining that it was part of his duty to apply the Masses celebrated by the various Fathers to different intentions, so that he would secure the Mass now being offered by St. Lewis for his intention. Cosmo knelt before the altar, pouring forth the most fervent supplications that God, through the Divine Sacrifice now being offered by His servant, would be pleased to restore his wife to health. At the moment of the elevation as he prostrated to adore, the church clock struck : at the same instant Cosmo felt a sudden thrill of intense joy, with a conviction that his prayer was granted. After Mass he went to explain the case to St. Lewis, but the holy Father

was going to preach that morning in the parish church of St. Stephen, so that he had not time to do more than exhort Cosmo to trust in God with confidence and resignation. On his return home, full of hope, Don Cosmo found that at the moment of the elevation his wife had been suddenly delivered : the child was dead. As the mother continued very ill for several days, Don Cosmo again had recourse to the Saint, who, before the case could be explained, said, " Fear nothing, your wife will get well, no evil will befall her." The truth of the prediction was soon proved by her complete recovery.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### VIRTUES OF THE SAINT.

Humility—Sincerity of this Virtue—Insults joyfully Received—Names he called himself—Which is the Holier?—Example in Confessional—The Gipsy—Father Peter of Salamanca—Novice about to be Professed—Patience in Illness—Glory to God—Fear—Love—Luminous with Charity—News—Zeal—Gift of Fear—How consistent with Charity?—Different kinds of Fear—Reasons for this Gift—Penance—Devotions—Blessed Sacrament—Holy Name of Jesus—Our Lady of the Rosary—Suffering Souls—Personal Description of the Saint.

“Gather up the fragments that remain, lest they be lost.”—ST. JOHN vi. 12.

**F**ROM the various events related in this history, the reader will be able to form some idea at least of the heroic degree of Christian virtue habitually practised by St. Lewis. Yet after all how imperfect must the picture be! Far from being any exaggeration of the reality, all that has been recorded must in fact give a very faint and inadequate notion of the real truth. How little we after all know of the most important side of his history, his interior life. We can only surmise what it must have been from his exterior actions, and from slight rays of light which he could not prevent appearing to the eyes of those around him.

But before standing at his deathbed to learn the last lessons he has to teach us in his mortal life, and to see how Saints die, it will be useful to say a little about some

of his more remarkable virtues, both to supply omissions and to make certain explanations.

First, then, we should remember his humility. It shines out conspicuously indeed throughout his whole life. But the perfection of this truly Christian virtue to which he had attained, is far beyond what we can conceive. Not only is it difficult to convey a true impression by any words that can be employed, but to us, ordinary Christians, the depths of the humility of such a soul as his, living continually in familiar intercourse with God, and therefore illuminated by an especial light from heaven, are simply unfathomable. It is like trying to talk an unknown language, or endeavouring to describe heaven in the words and according to the ideas of earth. Words must be used that appear exaggerations, but which remain after all only feeble images of the truth.

All who knew St. Lewis spoke unanimously of his humility as the most profound they had ever witnessed in any soul. This was the united testimony of his religious brethren, who, while they knew him intimately, were enlightened as well as experienced judges. The first degree of humility is the genuine contempt of self, arising from a high idea of God's Infinite Majesty, joined to a clear knowledge of man's nothingness and corruption. This contempt of self was so intense as well as sincere in St. Lewis, that it can be truthfully said of him that his one desire, to which all his thoughts tended, was to reduce himself to nothing. We are inclined to smile, when we hear that he habitually looked on himself and spoke of himself as the most vile and abject man in the whole Order, as the worst sinner in the whole world, and we are tempted to imagine that he could not sincerely have thought it. But this arises from our own ignorance of spiritual things, it is in fact an evidence of our own lack of humility. St. Lewis certainly meant all this, even much more, most sincerely. All that

was good in himself, he saw with the utmost clearness belonged to God. All that belonged to himself, he saw to be nothingness and sin. The least venial sin, almost invisible to our blindness, he saw so clearly in the light of God, that it was monstrous in his eyes. Then he ever remembered his own capability of sin, if God's grace were withdrawn for a moment : thus his self-contempt became an unfathomable depth.

That it was thoroughly sincere, is best proved from the fact that he was delighted when he found that other people thought little of him or blamed him, while, on the contrary, esteem was a real pain to his soul. This is the second degree of humility. If you had called him a miserable hypocrite, an ignorant fool, a stupid deaf fellow who imagined he was a Saint, nothing would have pleased him better. If any one said an insulting or humiliating thing to him, far from finding it difficult to endure, his face literally beamed with joy.

As an instance, besides the many already mentioned in the course of his life, it is related that certain gentlemen of Valencia, after vainly endeavouring to induce him to undertake something unsuited to his religious profession, were determined to show their indignation at his persistent though courteous refusal by insulting him grossly. Accordingly, pretending that his services were required by a sick person, they sent an earnest message to that effect. Lewis instantly obeyed the summons of charity. Hardly had he arrived when these so-called gentlemen began to abuse and insult him in the most grievous manner. They called him many foul names, and said the most injurious things to him, amongst the rest declaring him to be a bad religious, and a vagabond who, not having sufficient spirit of prayer and retirement to remain at home in his own convent, must needs wander from house to house for amusement. St. Lewis was not only patient, but rejoiced. He agreed with

his accusers, saying that although he had left the convent at their own request, still he was extremely obliged to them for their charity in reminding him of his faults, and that they understood his character better than other people.

After this, we can well understand that he was thoroughly in earnest in abusing himself when no one could be found to undertake to perform this office for him. His bodily infirmities gave him frequent occasion for the exercise of this favourite virtue. To them he constantly called attention. He would speak of himself as "the useless lame man," "the poor deaf fellow;" or, "a madman." "A disturber of the peace of others;" or, "the cause of any trouble that happened," were common terms by which he described himself, also as one of "the tares planted among the wheat." Probably St. Lewis did not often quote the classics, but one expression of Terence he was sometimes heard to apply to himself, "*Ego sum Davus perturbans omnia.*" On one occasion, going to a certain place to preach, he said to his companion, Joseph Vaides, as they approached their destination, "Look here, Brother, if they should ask you who is going to preach, you must answer that it is only a deaf, blind fellow, who is a great sinner." Once Father Antony Catalano put this question to him, to see what the humble man would reply, "Father, tell me what you think, which of us two is the greater sinner?" "Father," he replied, "I am." Then kindling into a kind of enthusiasm that testified to his earnestness he added, "Be assured it is true, I am the greatest sinner that inhabits this earth." Then striking his breast he exclaimed, "O wicked deaf sinner! justly doth God hold thee bound with so many chains." By these last words he alluded to the corporal infirmities under which he laboured.

All this proved clearly how eminent in his soul was the third degree of humility, which consists in seeking occasions of being despised by others. The transition from the

second to the third, from feeling delight in humiliations to seeking occasions of them, is manifestly easy. John Boil de Arenos, a gentleman more than once mentioned as a friend of St. Lewis, gives us an instance of this. When going to confession to the Saint he accused himself of giving way to some angry feeling against a religious on account of something he had said. St. Lewis, after a little hesitation, replied, "Tell me truly, was not I that religious man who thus made himself a bad example to you? I feel I am growing old and deaf, therefore sometimes I am inattentive to what I am doing, or cannot hear aright, and thus may have caused you pain. Besides, being terribly proud, I may have used words that shocked you." "By no means, Father," replied the penitent, astonished at the Saint's humble readiness to blame himself, "do not for a moment imagine that you were the religious, for you never spoke a word to offend me."

St. Lewis had an amusing way of accounting for the large number of persons who consulted him in various difficulties, spiritual and temporal. "They look upon me," he would say, "as a kind of gipsy. They talk to me therefore to catch me, and sometimes my words turn out true."

His humility made him always anxious not to trouble others, fearing lest he might annoy them by questions or difficulties. One day, when conversing with Father Peter of Salamanca, he observed that this Father appeared wearied, and, as we should now express it in colloquial phrase, "bored." Immediately Lewis cast himself on his knees before Father Peter, who was much his senior, to beg pardon. This rather annoyed Father Peter, for he considered it unnecessary, so he turned away refusing to notice the apology. But on three successive nights he was admonished in his sleep that God was not pleased with this treatment of His servant. At first this warning was

disregarded, as Father Peter considered it only a dream, but when it was repeated again and again he looked on it as more serious, so that going to St. Lewis he fell humbly at his feet to beg pardon. Father Peter had before this venerated the sanctity of St. Lewis highly, but his reverence for the holy man was much increased by this incident, which made a deep impression on his mind.

Afterwards, during the last illness of St. Lewis, Father Peter was his companion at Godella, where they were both the guests of the Archbishop. Father Peter's hand trembled with age, and once when giving Saint Lewis a cup of water to drink, his arm shook so much that some of the contents were spilt. Saint Lewis was amused, and alluding facetiously to the fact that Father Peter stammered in his speech, he said with a smile, "Well, Father! I see your hand shakes as well as your tongue." But hardly had the words escaped him before he feared to have wounded the feelings of the venerable religious, and embracing him affectionately he begged Father Peter's pardon with extreme humility.

This intense humility obliterated from his mind the remembrance of any good work he had done for God, and it appeared to him as if he had never begun to practise real virtue. So during the last year he spent on earth, being asked to pray for Brother Peter John, a novice who was to be professed on Saint Peter Martyr's feast, he exclaimed in earnest accents, "Ah happy Brother! who would not be a novice in order to make his vows and begin to serve God truly! Alas, I have not yet begun to serve Him!"

This extreme humility abode with him at all times. In sickness it prevented him from being exacting or ready to consider himself neglected. When it happened at times that the Infirmarian brought him food not well enough prepared for a sick man, he never showed the least sign of impatience, but always thanked those who attended him with hearty earnestness as if unworthy of their fraternal

care. This may appear almost trivial to relate of a Saint, but it is in such ordinary matters that genuine sanctity shines out. That sentence of Pascal is most true, "A man's virtue must not be measured by his extraordinary efforts, but by what he ordinarily does."

Humble as he was, he could not deny that God granted him extraordinary favours. In fact, humility forbade him so to do, for humility is truth. But he knew from whence came such favours. One day a certain Doctor of Theology noticed that Lewis had filled up the keyhole and crevices of his door. He exclaimed, "Good heavens, Father, perhaps you have done this lest any of us might catch sight of some wonderful vision!" The Saint looked very much confused, and turning his back on the speaker towards the window, he cast his eyes up to heaven ejaculating to himself, "TO GOD ALONE BE HONOUR AND GLORY FOR EVER AND EVER. AMEN" (1 Timothy i.).

From the exceeding depth of his humility and self-contempt we can at once infer that his soul must have risen to an intense degree of divine charity. Love is a fire. God, Who is charity, is therefore a consuming Fire (Heb. xii. 29). In the soul of Saint Lewis this spiritual flame had been nourished by prayer, penance, and works of mercy, to such a degree that it often manifested its presence by inflaming even the body with a physical heat. He acknowledged one day in conversation with an intimate friend, that if when he felt rather tepid, he thought of the Blessed Sacrament and made a spiritual communion, his whole body would so glow with a sensible heat, that sometimes he felt almost as if he were in a furnace.

From the same reason his body was often seen to grow luminous, and to shoot forth brilliant rays of light. On one festival of the Ascension, as he was fervently describing the glorious entrance of our Lord into heaven, he was transported almost out of himself, while bright rays shone

from his face ; and as he lifted his arms towards heaven, his whole figure became radiant with light. The same was frequently noticed by those who served or heard his Mass, and was sometimes visible during the long hours he spent in adoration, before the Blessed Sacrament. At these times the words of our Lord were visibly fulfilled in him, "The glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them" (St. John xvii. 22).

This heroic degree of the love of God was the reason why, like St. Dominic, he was scarcely ever heard to speak except of God, and kept silence when the conversation turned upon subjects of merely worldly interest. Indeed he often expressed the wonder he felt that religious, consecrated to God, should trouble themselves about unnecessary matters, or be able to amuse themselves in listening to idle conversation. It was noticed that he never listened to news, and was never heard to repeat to others what he might have seen or heard. The only object of his conversation was to promote the knowledge and love of God, and to excite feelings of compunction, and to attain this end he would skilfully introduce examples from the lives of the Saints and from the Holy Scripture.

His intense love for God's honour made him burn with holy zeal if he heard of sins committed, and sometimes when more public crimes were perpetrated, he was carried quite out of himself with indignation. On such occasions he would raise his hands towards heaven, crying out to excuse his vehemence, "I think that in this matter I also have the Spirit of God" (1 Cor. vii. 40).

At the same time the fear of God, as the whole history of his life abundantly proves, was ever one of the most prominent characteristics of his spiritual life. The words of David (Psalm ii.), "Serve ye the Lord with fear ; and rejoice unto Him with trembling," might very aptly be adopted as the motto of his life.



He used to acknowledge himself that if ever he felt tempted to indulge in the very slightest elation of mind in consequence of the singular favours he so frequently received from God, he was immediately checked by an influx of the most agonising fear of the everlasting loss of his soul. Sometimes this fear increased to such an intense degree, that the earth seemed ready to open her mouth and swallow him up as unworthy to encumber the ground. Thus, he used to say, God in His mercy restrains me from rushing headlong to my own destruction, like a restive horse in whose hard mouth is the galling curb, and whose sides must be lashed with the whip.

It was in great measure this abiding fear, at once the fruit and the cause of humility, that caused the sorrowful and worn expression which so often overshadowed, without destroying, the calm serenity of his countenance.

Occasionally, kindly disposed but rather officious persons, not understanding the reason of this expression, and supposing it to be entirely due to physical causes, would recommend some favourite receipt; as, for instance, soup made of particular herbs which were thought to have the property of absorbing noxious humours. The answer ought to have shown them the true cause of the sadness for which they had prescribed. "Alas!" the holy man would say, "to-morrow may be the last day of my life! How then can a Christian indulge in vain joy when he knows he must be presented before the tremendous tribunal of God, but knows not the day nor the moment?"

Many will perhaps wonder how such intense and abiding fear could be consistent with heroic charity according to the words of St. John, "Fear is not in charity: but perfect charity casteth out fear . . . he that feareth is not perfected in charity" (1 John iv. 18).

To answer this difficulty we must remember that there are different kinds of fear which may agitate the soul, and

their effects vary as widely as the fountains from which they flow. Some kinds of fear may be distinctly evil, as, for instance, the cowardly fear of this world and of what men will say ; and this, arising from corrupt self-love, alienates the soul from God.

But other kinds of fear, far from being evil, cause the soul, by turning towards God, to seek union with Him. This effect may be due either to the fear of the punishment which the justice of God must inflict on sin, or else to the fear, not of punishment, but of the guilt of sin as offensive and injurious to God. From these different sources two distinct kinds of fear arise, the first called servile, and the second filial fear. If a man fear the punishment of sin merely as an evil to himself, his fear is rightly called *servile*, because he is acting like a slave who works hard and performs his master's will, not from love or any desire to please him, but merely from dread of the whip. This fear of punishment looked at as an evil to self, is clearly selfish in its origin, because it springs from love of self, not from love of God. But if the punishment of sin is dreaded because it implies separation from God, then it is a nobler and less servile fear, and is the effect of Divine Grace. Our Blessed Lord distinctly exhorts us to this servile fear as a preservation against sin, in those words of St. Luke's Gospel, "I will show you whom you shall fear : fear ye Him, who, after He hath killed, hath power to cast into hell ; yea, I say unto you, fear Him."

Filial fear, however, is completely different from servile fear, because it arises from an entirely different source. It springs from the love of God, and is rightly called *filial*, because a loving son endeavours to please his father and to avoid everything offensive to him, not from dread of punishment like the slave, but because he fears the least thing that would afflict his beloved father. This kind of fear, in the supernatural order, is a gift of the Holy Ghost Him-

self, as it is written concerning Christ, "He shall be filled with the spirit of the fear of the Lord" (Isaias xi. 3).

Filial fear, if it be pure and genuine, is a mark of high sanctity, but as in those who are not yet perfect there is generally a mixture of motive, it seldom happens that fear is either wholly servile or purely filial. Generally it arises partly from fear of punishment and partly from love of God. It is then called initial fear, because it is found in those who are beginning to love God. It does not differ substantially from filial fear but in degree, in the same way that imperfect charity differs from perfect and pure charity.

Now the question arises as to what kind of fear is consistent with charity, and what kind of fear is cast out by charity.

(1.) It is clear that worldly fear or any other kind of fear which arises from an evil source and tends to separate the soul from God, is inconsistent with charity, and will be expelled in proportion to the growth of divine charity.

(2.) As to servile fear, St. Thomas teaches that, considered in one way, it is consistent with charity. For it is clear that separation from God is a punishment which charity must intensely dread: therefore fear of this punishment belongs to chaste and unselfish fear. But considered in another way, the fear of punishment is opposed to charity, and is therefore cast out by it. This is the case when a man fears punishment as contrary to his own natural good, as if evil to himself were the principal evil opposed to good, thus making himself his final and principal end. If, however, self is not made the final and principal end, but still a man fears punishment as an evil to himself, though not as if that were the chief or only evil to be dreaded, then it is not inconsistent with charity. To explain this, we can understand at once that if a man had the distinct will and desire to sin, in case he could do so without evil to himself, he would entertain the real desire to sin, which is inconsistent

with charity. Fear, therefore, inasmuch as it is servile, does not remain with charity ; but the substance of servile fear, by which is meant the fear of separation from God as a punishment of sin, is consistent with charity.

(3.) Filial fear is not only consistent with charity, but is increased by it and must grow with its growth in the soul. For the more a person loves another, the more does he fear to offend him or to be separated from him. This fear, therefore, is not only "the beginning of wisdom," but is "the fulness and crown of wisdom, filling up peace and the fruit of salvation" (Ecclus. i. 16, 20, 22).\*

To apply these theological principles to St. Lewis, we may without presumption suppose that in the early part of his spiritual warfare, there was a large amount of initial fear. The perfecting of charity is a gradual and painful process in the Saints. The thought so deeply meditated upon of the tremendous punishments consequent on sin which has not been perfectly repented of during this mortal life, was like the needle (to use the simile of St. Augustine) which introduced the golden thread of charity. The thread remains, the needle only passes through ; and so as charity gathered strength in his soul all servility of fear disappeared, having however a humble dread of God's justice, especially of the awful punishment of the loss of God however temporary. St. Hilarion and St. Arsenius, those heroes of sanctity, wonderful even among the Fathers of the desert for penance and prayer, feared at the hour of death. This humble fear arose from a deep conviction of their own unworthiness, but was tempered with an ever-abiding confidence in the love and faithfulness of God.

As St. Lewis increased in charity, his soul became more and more completely possessed with chaste, filial, reverential fear. He dreaded far more than death the least breath

\* This whole question about fear is fully treated by St. Thomas in the Summa, 2. 2. qu. xix.

of earthly imperfection which might tarnish ever so slightly the image of God reflected in his pure soul. The thought of separation from God was so unspeakably awful to his mind that it would strike terror into his inmost heart, and cause all his bones to tremble. But in this fear there was no servility. That had long ago been cast out by charity. It was fear of sin ; and it is certain that if it had been possible to have suffered all the pains of hell without separation from God, he would have instantly chosen them rather than the greatest possible amount of pleasure, if united with the smallest sin. So the fear of the loss of God as a punishment of unfaithfulness, ever possible in this mortal state, remained during his whole life, and even grew more keen with the greater development of charity.

This fear was allowed by Almighty God to preserve the soul of His chosen servant in that intense degree of humility which was his security. It also constantly reminded him to keep a never-ceasing watch over his own heart, and urged him to inflict every kind of punishment upon himself, in order to avoid supernatural pains in the next world.

Lastly, it must be remembered that this fear, however afflicting and painful, never diminished his confidence in God. It was himself, not God, whom his fear made him distrust. The magnitude of the graces showered upon him in so copious a measure, united to an exceedingly exalted idea of the sanctity required by the religious life, made him fear lest he should be found unfaithful in corresponding with the goodness of God. His humility taught him to believe that if God treated him as he deserved, these riches of grace would be taken from him, and bestowed upon another more faithful soul. But his trust in God remained unshaken. The best proof that his fear was a gift of the Holy Ghost, and did not arise from self-love or mere natural disposition, is found in the fact that it increased

his humility and confidence in the surpassing mercy and goodness of God.

Love, fear and humility combined, produced that generous spirit of penance for which he was remarkable even among the Saints. It is not presumptuous to say that he was thus distinguished, because in the collect of his festival the Church singles out two things as his special characteristics,—mortification of the body, and preaching the faith.

Enough has been said in relating the events of his life on the subject of his austerities, and the continual trying mortifications with which he chastised his body and brought it under subjection, allowing it no rest even in times of illness. His penances need not be again described, but there is an anecdote related of him in connection with them which must not be omitted. An intimate friend of the Saint, thinking that he carried his love of penance to an excess, remonstrated with him, and asked him his reason for so terrible a severity. "Why do you scourge yourself in this merciless way, Father?" he inquired. The reply was thoroughly characteristic. Lewis avoided the question by answering with a bright smile, "Well, what is to be done if I am so foolish as to go on in this way!"

The plank or box which he generally used instead of a bed has been often mentioned, and Antist particularly praises his prudence in wearing a penitential girdle made of flaxen cord with very hard knots, which inflicted pain, but did not penetrate the flesh.

St. Lewis had four special devotions that were his great delight; and as they contributed so much to the formation of his spiritual character, and at the same time are more able to be imitated than many other things, some notice of them will be found of practical value. These four devotions were those to the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, to the holy Name of Jesus, to Our Lady of the Rosary, and to the holy Souls in Purgatory.

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His devotion to the Blessed Sacrament was most tender, and at the same time most practical. His lively faith drew him towards the Victim of Love in that most adorable mystery with irresistible attraction. He spent hours in adoration before the altar, drawing the waters of life from the fountains of the Saviour, and his love for the holy Sacrifice made him celebrate with the utmost devotion even when suffering so severely as to be hardly able to stand. The ardour of his soul seemed at these times to communicate itself to those who were around the altar. The only matter in which he was inclined to rebel against the authority of the doctors during his illnesses was when they tried to prevent him celebrating the holy Sacrifice, and if these orders were peremptory, he always received holy Communion. With a hope of curing his deafness the doctors ordered for a considerable time that certain medicines should be taken very early in the morning. In spite of this the Saint managed to say Mass before taking them, and the doctors, not finding their prescription to have the desired effect, laid the blame on the Saint for celebrating Mass, insisting that it was necessary for his cure to relieve himself from that exertion in the early morning. On this point Lewis was firm, and replied that he would far rather suffer from deafness than deprive his soul of that divine food which would prepare it for heaven.

He also entertained an extreme veneration for the holy Name of Jesus, knowing that the Holy Ghost has said, "The Name of the Lord is a strong tower, the just runneth to it and shall be exalted" (Prov. xviii. 10). Father Antist says, "He had a remarkable devotion to the holy Name of Jesus as the saints always have, and as all good Christians, especially religious, ought to have. It is at least certain that any member of the Order of St. Dominic who had not an especial love for this devotion, would be unworthy of the name he bears. For besides all the other

reasons for the veneration of this holy Name, common to all Christians and religious, we have had in our Order the greatest saints who particularly cultivated this devotion, and amongst them we may specially notice the holy Father Jordan, the second General of the Order.

From his earliest infancy God had inspired the soul of St. Lewis with a most tender devotion to the Immaculate Queen of heaven, and his reverential love increased when he had received that habit which is believed to have been given to the Order of St. Dominic by the Blessed Virgin Herself. Beginning to recite the office of Our Lady as a little child, Lewis kept up that pious habit during his youth, adding to the office the five mysteries of the Rosary. After he was a religious the office of Our Lady was an obligation whenever a double feast was not being celebrated, but even on days when there was no obligation, he always recited it, however much oppressed with labour. Also from the time he joined the Order he always recited daily the fifteen mysteries of the Rosary. After dinner his practice was to make half an hour's meditation on the joys of Our Lady.

But not content with honouring Her himself, he had an earnest desire to spread devotion to Her among the faithful, and therefore he scarcely ever preached without exhorting his hearers to love Our Lady, to venerate Her, and to entertain extreme confidence in Her intercession. Generally in this exhortation he introduced the Rosary as the devotion specially pleasing to Our Lady, and particularly efficacious in obtaining Her patronage. After his instructions to the recently converted natives in South America, he almost always spoke of the Rosary, and related some miracle of which that devotion had been the means, in order to illustrate its power with God.

It has been noticed before that he generally attributed all the miracles which it pleased God he should work, to the powerful intercession of the holy Mother of God, and



frequently he cured the sick by touching them with his Rosary or hanging it round their neck. For himself he generally wore a blessed Rosary hanging around his own neck, especially at night. His devotion to the monthly procession of Our Lady of the Rosary, is also especially noticed by his biographers.

His compassion for the suffering souls in Purgatory appears throughout his life. It was increased by the vision vouchsafed him of the sufferings endured by his own father, and from that time he was constantly inflicting penances of great severity on himself, besides spending whole nights in prayer for the souls of the departed. That he did the same for the conversion of sinners has been too often mentioned during his life to require to be enlarged on again. It need only be said that the sincerity of his zeal for souls is thus proved, according to the teaching of blessed Albert the Great. That holy Doctor, in his "Paradise of the Soul," gives it as characteristic of true, as distinguished from false and only apparent, zeal, that those who have the genuine virtue are not content with preaching, hearing confessions, and other outward actions which have a certain honour connected with them, and may be sought in great measure for the excitement of active work, but are careful also to pray much and fervently for the conversion of sinners, as well as to fast, to take the discipline and to penance themselves in other ways in order to draw down grace from God for their conversion. Those who have read the life of St. Lewis will remember how true and sincere his zeal must have been if measured by this thoroughly sifting test.

It now only remains to add some description of the Saint's personal appearance, as described by those who knew him. In stature he was tall, or at least decidedly above the middle height. His countenance was rather long, with prominent cheek bones, the nose sharp and

aquiline, and the face pale, thin, and deeply wrinkled. His hair was black, but during the latter part of his life freely interspersed with white. The purity of his soul seemed to shine through his eyes, which were remarkable for their brightness, in spite of all his ill health, even to the end of his life.



## Part IV.

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### *THE REWARD.*

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“I have inclined my heart to keep Thy commandments for ever, on account of the reward.”—PSALM cxviii. 112.

“I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. As to the rest, there is laid up for me a crown of justice, which the Lord the just judge will render to me in that day.”—2 TIMOTHY iv. 7, 8.



## CHAPTER I.

### LAST ILLNESS.—1581.

Lewis' Sufferings from bad health—Preaches in the Church of St. Stephen—Unable to Preach the Lent—Appoints Father Antist—Receives Viaticum—Prophesies recovery to Another—Celebrates Mass—Cures three Children—Relapse in May—Cheerful in agonising Pain—Mental Prayer—His Madonna—Invocations—Music in the Infirmary—Humility—Mistaken Treatment—Revives, and says Mass—Sent to Clerical Hospital—Daily Confession and Communion—Cures the Sick—Fragrance of his suffering Body.

"Humble thyself before thou art sick, and in time of sickness show thy conversation."

"Let nothing hinder thee from praying always, and be not afraid to be justified even unto death : for the reward of God continueth for ever."—ECCLES. xviii. 21, 22.

**C**ERTAINLY no one who is afflicted with sickness has any reason to be depressed by imagining that his pains are a mark of God's anger, for seldom does it happen that any special favourite of His Divine Majesty enjoys a life exempt from bodily as well as mental sufferings. In fact, sickness is one of the commonest gifts bestowed upon the saints, who are so enlightened by the Holy Spirit as to understand the hidden value of suffering, and can exclaim from their hearts with St. Pius V., "Lord, increase my pains, but increase also my patience."

Even those destined for the arduous labours of apostolic work have, for the most part, to endure the sufferings of ill-health, by which all the mere natural excitement of human activity is allayed, and the soul drawing all its energy from

the fortitude of the Holy Ghost, this heavenly gift supports even the frail body. "I glory in my infirmities, that the strength of Christ may dwell in me."

St. Lewis was no exception to this ordinary rule. Never did he enjoy, as he himself acknowledged, a single day of complete health. From his early childhood he had been weak, and the austerities of the religious life, together with his voluntary penances, diminished the little strength he possessed. A disease of the eyes producing great weakness of sight, which increased with his age, gave him constant annoyance. His hearing was very imperfect, from some complaint of the ears which also was the source of much pain and irritation, and he suffered even more from the various methods employed with a view of preserving his sight and hearing, which it was sometimes feared he would altogether lose, than from the diseases themselves.

One of the most tormenting of his maladies was the ulcerous wound in his left leg, which, it has been frequently mentioned, he suffered from for years. It was his constant companion during the labours of the South American Mission. He was also afflicted very frequently with vertigo, and during these attacks he often fainted completely away. These two complaints rendered walking a most trying and painful labour, yet his journeys were almost without exception accomplished on foot. He also laboured under another painful malady, the nature of which is not specified.

From these various illnesses, it is not wonderful that he was always very pale and emaciated, while the cadaverous look of his face was increased by the disease of the eyes. Still he never gave way. So strong a spirit resided in this weak afflicted body, that if he had been compelled to accept some dispensation, no sooner was his health slightly improved than he returned to his usual labours and austerities; rose at midnight for matins, refused the use of linen, besides observing the abstinence prescribed by the rule.

After the poison administered to him in the Indies, which, according to the ordinary laws of nature, would have killed him, he suffered more than before. His weakness of stomach constantly increased; worms, which were apparently the effect of the poison, sometimes actually appeared in his mouth. This horrible complaint was suffering enough, but he endured still more from the remedies employed for its relief. The doctors, we are told, tried various and extraordinary medicines, and as might have been anticipated, these horrible concoctions only finished the work begun by the Indian poison, simply adding to the tortures they were vainly intended to alleviate. So much was this the case that the poor Saint would sometimes say with tears, "Pray, leave me alone, and suffer God to do what He pleases with me; may His will be done!" Then would he turn with heroic patience to the crucifix, repeating his favourite ejaculation, so constantly on his lips, "Lord, here burn, here cut, here never spare, so that in eternity Thou mayest spare!"

In reward for his constant and truly heroic patience, which proved how sincere was his desire of martyrdom and his love of God, he received the power, as so many instances already related have shown, of curing the maladies of others. Though sick and suffering himself, he laid his hands on the sick and they were healed; but for himself he never asked relief, his only prayer was, "Here cut, here burn, but spare me in eternity."

The last active employment of the Saint's life was at the beginning of the year 1581, just ten months before his departure to eternal life. It has been already mentioned incidentally that on the Feast of St. Stephen, at the end of the year 1580, he had preached in the parish church, dedicated under the invocation of that glorious martyr, the same church in which St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Lewis himself had been baptized, and in which the body of the latter



• Saint now rests. After this we hear of him preaching, in spite of his infirmities, in the Cathedral of the city \* on the Festival of the Epiphany.

On the Sunday within the octave of the same feast, his apostolic voice was heard for the last time in the Temple church, at the urgent request of some influential persons, who, knowing that his time was short, desired once more to hear the Word of God from his mouth.

His brother, James Bertrand, who was the Rector of St. Stephen's Church, being more solicitous for the spiritual advantage of his people than thoughtful for the health of his brother, had induced him to promise a Lenten course of sermons, from which the best results were confidently anticipated. When Lent approached, however, the weakness of the servant of God was so extreme, that it became evident that he could not perform his promise. He therefore asked Father Antist to undertake the work in his place. Few positions could be more trying than for a man of inferior powers to appear in the place of a celebrated popular preacher, and Father Antist felt the difficulty of venturing, with very little opportunity of preparation, to act as a substitute for a preacher so highly esteemed as St. Lewis. He shall speak for himself: "Father Lewis wished me to preach the Lent in his place, but I had only lately returned from Italy more dead than alive from the sufferings I had endured from storms at sea, besides other difficulties of the journey; above all, from the use for a whole month of impure water in the ship, and as yet I had not by any means recovered my strength. Moreover, I had never preached every day during Lent, nor even so much as three or four times each week; I had no Lenten course of sermons prepared, and I therefore felt utterly unable to undertake the work. My friends also warned me that it

\* "In Majori Ecclesia Civitatis."

would be most imprudent under these circumstances to consent, that my reputation as a young preacher would be unjustly injured by attempting a task beyond my powers, and that I was not obliged to undertake what I felt unable to perform. But on Sexagesima Sunday, calling me into his cell, in the presence of James Bertrand, his brother, he told me to consent and God would help me. Upon this, I could doubt no longer; so, confiding in this promise, I accepted the duty. My trust was not misplaced, for the prayers of the holy Father obtained for me such help from God, that although before that time I had never preached oftener than once during the week, I was prepared with a sermon every day that Lent without a single exception, while, at the end, my health was stronger than before I began."

At the beginning of Lent the servant of God became so dangerously ill that the Fathers considered it prudent to administer the holy Viaticum. During this illness the Archbishop of Valencia was constantly at the bedside of St. Lewis; not only on account of his intimate friendship with the Saint, but also to be edified by his example as well as instructed in the spiritual life by his holy conversation. He was indeed a living example of all he had ever preached about the necessity of cheerful patience in suffering. The Archbishop was therefore present while the Viaticum was administered, as also another Bishop, besides several laymen of distinction. Before receiving the holy communion, the Saint made aloud a long and fervent profession of his faith, declaring that he firmly believed everything which the Holy Roman Church believed. He then earnestly besought Almighty God not to revoke the sentence of death, nor to restore health to his body, but for his soul he earnestly and with many tears begged for mercy from God, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Redeemer, and through the intercession of the blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, the Mother of God.

He then besought the prayers of the heavenly court, of the angels, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and virgins. Then he begged the intercession of our holy Father St. Dominic, and of all the religious of his Order in heaven; especially he invoked by name St. Peter Martyr, St. Antoninus, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Vincent Ferrer. After pronouncing the name of St. Vincent he paused for a short space, then exclaimed, "Oh holy Father Vincent!—'my Father, my Father, the chariot of Israel, and the driver thereof!'" (4 Kings ii. 12). He proceeded then to invoke St. Raymund and St. Catherine of Sienna, afterwards St. Francis, with all the religious of his Order, St. Augustine, St. Benedict, St. Bruno, with all the saints of their Orders; lastly, all the blessed inhabitants of the kingdom of heaven.

The ardent faith, profound humility, and inflamed charity of the Saint, while pouring forth prayers to those patrons with whom, as heavenly friends, he had been accustomed to converse during life, moved the bystanders to tears. After he had received with intense devotion the most holy Viaticum, the Archbishop of Valencia embraced him with the tenderest love, while at the same time he managed to draw off from his finger a ring of bone, which the Saint wore, though for what object is not clear. This ring the Archbishop preserved with the veneration due to a precious relic.

Whilst lying thus prostrate on a bed of pain, the Saint had still the satisfaction of assisting others in their sufferings. After he had been fortified with the holy Viaticum, Don John Boil of Arenos arrived in great affliction at the convent door, asking urgently to be allowed to speak to St. Lewis. Considerable difficulty was made; the Fathers representing the necessity of leaving St. Lewis unmolested, as well for the peace of his mind as for the health of his body, but Don John persevered in his request. A refusal

he could not take : his daughter being dangerously ill, his fatherly affection could not be satisfied without obtaining the prayers of the dying Saint. Father James of Salamanca, at length taking compassion on him, managed to introduce him into the infirmary, where he found the venerable Father lying with his face turned towards the wall to avoid distraction, holding a crucifix clasped in his hands. It was nine in the evening, so that the whole convent was in profound silence, consequently the noise made by Don John entering the room disturbed Lewis. Turning round he fixed his eyes intently upon his visitor, who at once began to apologise for his unseasonable intrusion. "Pardon me, Father, for troubling you at this hour, my great affliction must be my excuse." The Saint received him with the utmost kindness as if he were suffering nothing himself, requesting him to sit by his bedside. He then asked all the details of his daughter's illness, and what hopes were entertained of her recovery. At last he spoke thus, "Don John, do not be disturbed, for you may rest assured that your daughter will not die of this illness, God will preserve her life. Exhort her to go to confession, and to receive the blessed Eucharist in thanksgiving." After these words, as the Saint once more turned his face away towards the wall to resume his prayers before the crucifix, Don John saw that he could not again attract his attention ; so, devoutly kissing his hand, he withdrew. On his return home he was able to greet his daughter, who was already somewhat improved, with the positive assurance that she would not die of this illness ; and after a few days her recovery was complete.

The appointed time for the Saint's departure, already foretold by him, not having yet arrived, a few days after the reception of the holy Viaticum, he so far revived as to be able to celebrate Mass in the chapel of St. Vincent Ferrer, which, having formerly been the cell of that Saint,

was situated in the dormitory of the Fathers. Here the last sacrifices were offered by St. Lewis, who rose from his bed to celebrate, even when scarcely able to stand. In fact, he several times fainted immediately the Mass was over, but his fervour enabled him to celebrate again the next morning. One of the religious remonstrated with him, representing it as a duty to remain in bed, lest the exertion of saying Mass might hasten his death, but the Saint replied, "My brother, the holy Sacraments of the Church kill no one. On the contrary, they benefit the health of the body as well as of the soul, if that is expedient and pleasing to God."

"It is not surprising," writes Father Antist, "that he should show this great desire to celebrate the holy Sacrifice during his last illness, when he felt his time to be short, since during his whole life as a priest he had hardly ever passed a single day without saying Mass, besides going twice to confession. He once told a spiritual friend in confidence, that frequently when he felt very tepid, he suddenly experienced, after he had received the blessed Sacrament, an internal heat which caused his whole body even, as well as his soul, to glow, as if he were in a furnace of the fire of love.

"Here it may be observed, that although it is an error of modern heretics, to consider certain bodily emotions of sensible fervour to be an undoubted sign of the presence of the Holy Spirit, still it cannot be denied that sometimes the saints can exclaim with David, 'My heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the Living God' (Ps. lxxxiii.); and that they also cry out to God with the same holy Psalmist, 'Pierce Thou my flesh with Thy fear' (Ps. cxviii). For although love and fear are chiefly a purely spiritual banquet with which God refreshes the soul, still sometimes they overflow so much as to affect even the body."

Hearing that the holy Father was sufficiently recovered

to say Mass, a good woman of Valencia, who had three sick children, begged a Father of the convent to use his influence to induce the Saint to say Mass for the poor little sufferers, and to bestow upon them his health-giving blessing. St. Lewis gladly assented. After offering the holy Sacrifice for this intention, he ordered the children to be brought to him in order that he might bless them, and read a gospel over them. This he did on two occasions, but when the religious, who was interested in them, was bringing them a third time, he said, "There is now no necessity for them to come. Their health will be restored." Their happy mother was soon able to offer her thanksgiving to God, who had deigned through the prayers of His servant to cure all her suffering little ones.

The partial recovery of St. Lewis lasted till the middle of May, when a relapse rendered him so ill, that for several days he was unable to take anything except a few drops of liquid. His whole frame was racked with most acute pains, which he bore with his accustomed patience and joyful serenity of soul. His own account of the agonies he endured at this period was, that "although he felt his chest riven, his bones as if broken, his legs as if cut into pieces, he valued these pains more than the most precious things the world could give, for he considered them a sign of God's mercy, and a special gift from His Divine Majesty."

The Archbishop, on one of his constant visits, heard the servant of God moaning gently, and seeing his whole body trembling with the violence of his pains, bent over the suffering Saint, saying, "Father Lewis, are you not glad to receive that which God has sent, in order to suffer something in return for the many things He endured for you, that you may depart hence more purified in soul?" "Verily, my lord," answered the Saint, "I would not

exchange these pains for any earthly good ; and I blush with shame to think of these great favours which, without any merit of mine, the Lord has given to me, a great sinner. ‘Lord, here cut, here burn, here never spare, so that in eternity Thou sparest !’ ”

Although in this utterly prostrate condition, he not only went every day to confession, and received the blessed Eucharist, if he could possibly swallow the sacred species, but he devoted two hours each day to mental prayer, one hour in the morning and the second in the evening. He made an urgent request to the Infirmarians not to allow any one to disturb him during those two hours in which his one desire was to be alone with God. He also strongly exhorted them never to allow a single day to elapse, whatever might be their duties, without devoting some portion of it to mental prayer, which he called the food of the soul, and the necessary nourishment for the increase of virtue.

Besides his crucifix the Saint kept ever before him an image of the Blessed Virgin, which had been brought from Algiers by a liberated Christian slave.\* The Infirmarians who nursed him during this protracted illness were highly edified at the ardent prayers which he poured forth to his Blessed Mother, the Queen of the Holy Rosary, before this Image. They also noticed that he was accustomed after invoking many canonised Saints to implore the intercession of many holy religious who had died in his own Order and convent with the reputation of sanctity. Amongst these he especially mentioned the Blessed Martyr who had begun the reformation of the Province, Father Dominic of Monte Mayor, as also his old friend and master in the spiritual life, the venerable Father John Micon, Father

\* After the Saint's death this Image was placed within the screen that surrounded the Chapel of Our Lady of the Rosary.—*Father Antist.*

Michael of St. Dominic, who had appeared to him in glory shortly after his death, Father Laurence Lopez, and Father Bartholomew de la Costa, both of whom had formerly been his confessors. Besides these venerable servants of God, he implored the assistance of Brother Charles de Mencos, who had died not long before, in his twentieth year, and of whose purity of heart the Saint entertained so high an opinion, that he spoke of him as an angelic youth, and quoted concerning him those words of the Holy Ghost, "He was taken away lest wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul" (Wisdom iv. 11).

To distract his mind from the constant pain he endured, his friends sometimes induced the Prior to allow some gentle music to be played in the infirmary. At these times he used to cover his face, so that with all distraction shut out, he might contemplate the delightful harmony of the heavenly spirits, of which the choicest music of this world is but the foretaste and the faint reflection. When this covering was removed, it was moistened with the sweet tears he had shed.

His humility during his illness was as conspicuous as at other times. He showed how sincerely he esteemed every one before himself, for instead of despising the spiritual assistance of others, there was no one whose services he did not willingly receive and gratefully value. When any of his religious brethren visited him, however young in years or in the Order, he would entreat them to read a gospel over him, then to allow him reverently to kiss their consecrated hands. If any refused through veneration to him, he was deeply mortified. He was told of a simple layman, a devout man, who, by reciting certain prayers over the sick, had, according to popular report, been the instrument of many cures. On being asked if he would allow this man to visit him, far from disdaining his services, the Saint



at once humbly consented, joining devoutly in the prayers recited for his benefit.

As if the torture of the continual pains of his illness were not sufficient, the doctors thought it necessary to add the pangs of starvation to those he unavoidably suffered. Not in the least understanding the strange complication of diseases which afflicted him, they forbade all sustenance; for several days they actually would allow him nothing to maintain his exhausted body except a few drops of liquid. This mistaken treatment simply added to his sufferings. He bore the privation in silence for some days, but at length, exhausted with fever and utterly prostrate with parching thirst and want of nourishment, he was obliged to complain. Calling Father Antist to his bedside, in a faint whisper he implored him through the Wounds of Jesus Christ, and the love of the glorious Virgin Mother, to persuade the doctors to allow him to eat at least a morsel of bread. "Such compassion did I feel," says Father Antist, "that I could not refrain from tears, when I saw this man who had always been so austere in his penance, so severe towards himself, and yet endowed with such miraculous powers for the relief of others, now at the end of his life begging like a poor street mendicant for a little bread to avert starvation. I thought then of Christ crying out on the cross, 'I thirst.'"

As might have been expected, St. Lewis began to gather strength directly the doctors were induced to allow him some nourishment; in a few days, to the astonishment of every one, he was able to leave his bed of suffering and once more to celebrate the holy Sacrifice. His brother, Jerome Bertrand, a secular priest who had charge of a hospital for priests in the city, begged the Superiors to allow the holy man to become one of his patients in order that the partial recovery that had now apparently begun might be assisted by the change. The Prior willingly

assented, so that Lewis was consigned to the loving hands of his brother.

It is unnecessary to say that he was the edification of all in the clerical hospital. His very presence lifted men's minds to that hidden kingdom whither he was hastening, and to the desire of that Vision for which his soul thirsted. The Fathers visited him constantly to administer the holy Sacraments, knowing how keenly he always suffered if deprived of the opportunity of daily confession and communion when unable to celebrate the holy Sacrifice. This he managed occasionally to do, in spite of his extreme weakness, for an altar was erected, by special permission of the Archbishop, in the corridor of the hospital.

While living in this hospital his assistance was implored by a poor woman, who had been suffering for four years from a painful disease, for which she had as yet found no relief. The Saint advised her, through humility, to seek a cure from a woman who had the reputation of being able to heal that particular complaint, but she persisted in seeking health through his prayers. Compassion at length overcoming the reluctance of his humility, he blessed her with the sign of the cross. In five days the complete removal of her malady was the reward of her perseverance and confidence.

The doctors who attended the holy Father in this long illness, had other proofs of his heroic sanctity besides the marvellous patience and sweetness with which he suffered the most excruciating pains. Two of them, Lewis Collado and Joseph Ruguarte, men of high distinction in their profession, both agreed in the testimony they gave as to the supernatural perfume which the suffering body of the Saint exhaled. No offensive odour was perceived even from the inveterate ulcer in his leg. These two doctors both noticed a peculiar and indescribable perfume of intense fragrance, totally different from anything they had ever before experi-

enced, when they removed the bedclothes to feel the pulse of their patient. It has been mentioned before how on various occasions this mysterious perfume of exquisite delicacy had been perceived by different people, especially when kissing his hand, but in the midst of so long and terrible an illness this seemed the more extraordinary. Father Francis Sala adds his testimony to this fact. He had peculiar opportunity of judging on the point, for during the time St. Lewis was Prior he had often dressed the wound in his leg, and to his astonishment, far from feeling any of the natural repugnance he would have expected to experience, the very sight of the ulcer caused a strange but very sensible feeling of pleasure, which was often so strong as to impel him, almost in spite of himself, to kiss the wound, which he did without perceiving the slightest ill odour.

## CHAPTER II.

### LAST DAYS.

Paternal care of the Archbishop—Waits on Lewis—Sitting at the Window—Carried in a Chair—Church at Burgiazor—Prophecy—The borrowed Scapular—Feast of the Assumption—Hopes of Recovery—Relapse—Returns to Clerical Hospital—To the Convent—Last twenty-seven Days—Penance though Dying—Distinguished Visitors—The Prince Dying—Natale Puzzled—Archbishop learns the Truth—Evidence of the Miracle—Four Days more—Linen Garment—Extreme Pain—Crucifix and Image of our Lady—St. Vincent Ferrer—Extreme Unction, Oct. 7.

"O God, my God, look upon me; why hast Thou forsaken me? . . . I am poured out like water, all my bones are scattered . . . my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue hath cleaved to my jaws; and Thou hast brought me down to the dust of death."—PSALM xxi.

"In the head of the book it is written of me, that I should do Thy Will, O my God."—PSALM xxxix, 8.



As the summer was now advancing, the heat in Valencia was growing intense; the doctors therefore decided that St. Lewis ought to be carried to some cooler spot in the country, where they considered that there might be a hope of his recovery. His kind friend the Archbishop immediately invited him to his own country villa, in a beautiful place among the hills, called Godella. Here he remained for two months, the Archbishop treating him with every attention that the most considerate kindness could suggest. No father could have done more for his only son. Not content with providing everything which he thought the Saint could be induced to

use, he devoted himself personally to his service. At dinner time he always appeared in his guest's room, often leaving persons of high rank or business of importance, in order to bless the food, hoping that thus he might tempt the invalid to take a little nourishment. He would allow no one else to serve him. With his own hands he used to cut the meat into small pieces, thus often succeeding in inducing the Saint to eat, when nothing would otherwise have crossed his lips. But he only dared to offer him the plainest fare. Knowing St. Lewis so well, he feared that to offer him anything like delicacies would injure rather than benefit his health, owing to the trouble of mind he would suffer. Whilst he was in the infirmary of the convent, many presents had been sent by various friends, but hardly ever could the Saint be persuaded to touch them; they were given, according to his earnest desire, to other religious who were sick.

To see himself thus waited upon by a Prelate of so exalted a rank as the Archbishop of Valencia and Patriarch of Antioch, filled the humble Saint with confusion, so that he would often say, "I know well that God our Lord has inspired your lordship thus to humble yourself to wait on a miserable, worthless sinner like me, in order to excite me to begin even now at the end of my life to love and serve His Divine Majesty."

The Patriarch, however, so highly esteemed his holy guest, that he considered it an honour to perform the least service for him; and even when personages distinguished by their rank and position were visiting him, nothing would induce him to be absent when food was brought to the Saint, in order that he might enjoy the privilege of assisting him.

Whilst eating, St. Lewis never broke silence unless when he felt obliged from respect to the Archbishop to answer a question with a few brief words; and when the short meal was ended, they both withdrew to a window at which the

Saint loved to sit. The view was exquisite, but it was not any earthly beauty that attracted Lewis. As he sat, his eyes were turned upwards to the glorious summer sky, the brightness of which reminded him of that heavenly kingdom to which he was hastening. At this window the Archbishop sat with him, leading him to converse on spiritual subjects, on the beauty and love of God.

By the advice of the doctors, who were anxious that the Saint should have the advantage of some amount of exercise without the fatigue of walking, the Archbishop provided a sedan chair carried between two mules, as best suited to the hilly district. In this chair the Saint went on the 4th of August to a little hamlet called Burgiazor, to receive Holy Communion in the church. After his thanksgiving, as the good repair, tasteful decoration, and well-furnished appearance of this village church attracted his attention, he asked the name of the benefactor. One of the Sacristans of the Cathedral of Valencia, who happened to be present, informed him that a lady named Mary Pazliares, who had a house in the neighbourhood, had repaired and ornamented the church, adding, "It would be a great charity if your Reverence would pray for her, as she is seriously ill." "Tell her," replied the Saint, "that the Mother of God will soon repay her for what she has done for this church, for soon she will die, and not long afterwards I shall follow her." The lady survived eleven days, dying on the Festival of the Assumption of our Blessed Lady, two months before the departure of the Saint.

There was an Augustinian Priory in the neighbourhood, at a place called Rocca, to which St. Lewis was one morning carried in his chair, again to receive Holy Communion. Before entering the church he noticed a considerable stain on his white scapular. Fearing it would not be reverent thus to approach the altar, he borrowed a scapular from

Father Gregory Sator. This religious was astonished to find the scapular, after the Saint returned it, redolent with an odour of wonderful sweetness, which lasted for the space of eight days.

On the Festival of the Assumption the Patriarch, having to preach in Valencia, was obliged to leave the Saint. Usually he celebrated a private Mass in his own house, at which St. Lewis assisted, but on this Feast there was only the High Mass in the village church, and at this the Saint was too ill to be present. He therefore rose very early, had himself carried in his chair to the Augustinian Priory at Rocca, where, after making his confession to Father John Sator, he received Holy Communion, returning afterwards to Godella.

The kindness of the Archbishop was rewarded by considerable improvement in the Saint's health. Indeed, the doctors were so much surprised by the change that they began to entertain hopes of his ultimate recovery, shrewdly suspecting at the same time that this was more to be attributed to a supernatural interference to preserve so valuable a life, than to any skill of their own. But St. Lewis never wavered in the certainty he had already expressed of his approaching death. The Archbishop mentioned to him the favourable reports of the doctors, adding, "I should have hopes of your life being prolonged, if I did not remember what your Reverence told Father James of Salamanca, last year, about the time of your death." The Saint replied, "I perfectly remember what I said that day, and well contented am I that God's Holy Will should be accomplished in me."

Such was the extreme desire of the holy man to receive Holy Communion at least, since his weakness would not allow him to offer the Adorable Sacrifice himself, that if anything prevented the Archbishop from celebrating at home, St. Lewis felt compelled to go to the church, although

at some little distance. It seems strange that no other priest could be found to say Mass in the house, for there was evident danger to his health in these journeys. One day that he thus received Communion in the church, the weather being unfavourable, he suffered much from the violence of the wind. In spite of the apparent improvement in his health, this was sufficient to cause a relapse. His disorder so rapidly increased that it was considered prudent to have him at once conveyed to Valencia, where he was received by his brother in the hospital for the clergy. Whilst here he cured a poor girl who was suffering under a most painful complaint.

As it was now the beginning of September, the Fathers, remembering his prophecy about the Feast of St. Denis, saw with anxiety the little strength that still remained slowly but surely ebbing away, and they began to fear that he might die while absent from the convent, which would have afflicted them no less than Lewis himself. They therefore unanimously urged the Prior, Father Francis Alemani, to recall the Saint, that during his last moments he might have the consolation of being at home. Lewis was filled with joy when the Prior expressed a wish that he should return. It was his one earthly wish, for only obedience had made him leave his convent for a single day. To the satisfaction of all, the doors of his beloved convent closed for the last time behind him. To that home, wherein he had lovingly offered his youth to God, he now returned, the battle ended, to make the last sacrifice of his religious life by a holy death. Intensely, yet with resignation, did he long for the appointed hour. He was carried straight to the infirmary, where he remained, unable to move from his bed, for the twenty-seven days he had still to live. Every morning he went to confession and communion. His custom during these days was to take some medicine or food not long before midnight, then to fast till day-



break, when the holy Sacrifice was celebrated in the infirmary.

As he had been so long accustomed to take the short sleep he allowed himself on a wooden bench or a box with two books for a pillow, he found the bed in the infirmary too soft and luxurious even though lingering in a painful illness. But knowing that the doctors would not permit him to lie on a board, he contrived to turn his bed into an instrument of penance, so as not to indulge his poor emaciated body even in its last illness. This was discovered by Father John Lescano, who was anxious to kiss the hand of the dying Saint. This mark of respect was always repugnant to Lewis; he therefore hid his hand under the bedclothes, but Father John, who would not be repulsed, put his own hand into the bed to find that of the Saint. To his astonishment he felt a hard board, which Lewis had managed to introduce unnoticed into his bed, having placed it under his shoulders. "Oh Father Lewis," exclaimed Lescano, "how can you do this in your present suffering state?" "Ought I not," replied the Saint, "to die on the cross? If the martyr's cross is denied me, ought I not to secure what I can? But mention this, I beg, to no one."

By this time all the city had heard the rumour of the approaching death of the holy Father, for it was publicly known that he himself had predicted the very day of his departure. Great numbers were of course anxious to see him once more, to obtain his blessing before he left the world, with a promise of his future intercession in heaven. The convent was therefore besieged by a crowd of devout persons eager to be admitted to his room, if only for a moment, in order to kiss his hand or scapular, and to ask his prayers. The infirmarians were in despair. Quiet was essential for their patient; yet it was impossible to refuse admission to all. Many indeed were obliged to content

themselves with sending in rosaries and medals, to be laid upon the sick-bed of the dying Saint. The women also, as anxious as the men, but unable to penetrate the enclosure, collected in the church to pray for him, and to gather any details of his illness.

But many persons of rank and consequence, who were as anxious to visit the infirmary as those of a lower order, could not be excluded, though their presence was a source of extreme confusion to the humble Saint. He who had always avoided even the slightest and most ordinary marks of honour, was now compelled to see the most exalted personages, ecclesiastics as well as laymen, kneeling around his bed, esteeming it a privilege to be allowed to touch the very clothes that covered him. One day the Grand Master of the Military Order of Montesa,\* Father Peter Lewis Galzerano of Borgia, son of the Duke of Gandia, asked to be admitted, with a knight of his order, to bid farewell to the Saint, as business compelled him to leave Valencia, and he feared that the holy Father would have departed to heaven before his return. On entering the room he fell humbly on his knees before the bed, begging the holy Father to bestow on him a parting benediction, while with many tears he devoutly kissed his feet. St. Lewis was a prisoner, bound by illness to his bed, or he would have fallen prostrate before his illustrious visitor, but unable to move, he wept with confusion, whispering in tones scarcely audible from weakness, "How comes it that your lordship should think of thus treating a miserable sinner!"

\* This Military Order was instituted in 1316, by Pope John XXII., at the earnest request of the King of Aragon. All the possessions of the Templars were bestowed on this new Order, and the object of the institution was to oppose the power of the Moors in Granada and in the kingdom of Valencia itself. Montesa, an impregnable stronghold in Valencia, was given them as their headquarters, and they were established under the title of Knights of Our Lady of Montesa. Their habit was white with a red cross.

Both Father Antist and Aviñone relate almost in the same words a very remarkable story about the death of a certain prince of high rank, who learnt from St. Lewis in a miraculous manner the day when death was to release him from all worldly cares. It is not clear who this prince was, but the historians call him "Peter Cernovich, Duke of Sabiac and Despot of Bulgaria."\* This prince, while travelling through Spain on some affairs of importance, was taken seriously ill at Torrente, not far from the city of Valencia. He was only thirty-eight years old. Finding his journey thus suddenly terminated, while his life probably also was in great danger, in the prime of his manhood, in a strange country far from his home, he very naturally felt at first extremely depressed and troubled. But being a good Christian, he submitted humbly to God's all-powerful will, and sent for the parish priest, Doctor Natale, in order to be strengthened by the holy Sacraments.

On a second visit Natale found the patient more composed and in better spirits, so that he encouraged him to take a more favourable view of his bodily health, as there did not appear any reason to despair of his recovery. "No," replied the prince decidedly, "I shall not recover, I shall certainly die here." "What makes you so certain?" asked the priest. "After you gave me Holy Communion," replied the prince, "two persons suddenly entering the room carried me to Valencia, where I found myself in the cell of that holy religious (meaning St. Lewis), who, after comforting me with words of exceeding sweetness, warned me to prepare for immediate death, which, he said, would happen on a Sunday." The parish priest was astounded, for he felt certain that the prince had been strictly confined

\* The Bollandist editor remarks, that though he does not understand this title, this need not throw any doubt upon the facts of the story related by Father Antist, who was living in Valencia at the time; and was a writer of scrupulous accuracy.

to his bed during the whole time, yet he spoke with such quiet certainty that there were no signs whatever of any mental wandering. Moreover, the effects of this visit on his soul were as manifest as they were salutary, for whereas death had before appeared to him most bitter, and he was inclined to lament with Ezechias, "My life is cut off as by a weaver; whilst I was yet but beginning, He cut me off," he was now, though certain of his approaching end, not only resigned, but full of holy joy at the prospect of departing to God, and inclined to exclaim with the Psalmist, "I rejoiced at the things that were said to me, we shall go into the House of the Lord."

Natale determined to investigate the matter, so he at once proceeded to Valencia, where he related the circumstances to several of the Dominican religious. These Fathers could throw no light on the mystery, but advised him to ask St. Lewis himself the direct question whether the Prince had visited his cell. This he did, but the holy man appeared unwilling to enter on the subject, merely answering with a sigh, "Many people come here!" Natale did not presume to press the matter further, so that he left Valencia no less perplexed than before.

Of all this the Patriarch being duly informed, he determined to ascertain the truth. On his next visit, therefore, he questioned Lewis as to whether he had received a visit from a foreign prince within the last few days. "Yes," answered the Saint, "he did come here. He is a good man; in a few days he will enter into the glory of heaven." The Prelate further asked if he recognised those who accompanied the prince and conducted him to the convent, but St. Lewis replied that he did not know who they were. But it pleased the Divine Majesty that this should not be the only evidence of the miraculous visit of the prince to the dying Saint, for Father Francis Ferrer, of the Order of St. Francis of Paul, was able to give valuable testimony.

This Father assures us that he went, accompanied by another religious, to visit the prince after he had received Holy Viaticum from the parish priest, when, to his amazement, he found a bright light in the room, but the sick man, who had just received the Viaticum, was nowhere visible. Astounded, both at the inexplicable brightness, for which there was nothing to account, as also by the absence of the prince, he waited for a time, when suddenly he became conscious that the sick man had returned to his bed. In answer to his expressions of astonishment at the light he had witnessed, the prince, his face beaming with heavenly joy, told him that he had been conducted by St. Dominic and St. Vincent Ferrer to the cell of a holy religious of the Order of Preachers in Valencia.

It was generally expected that the prince would leave this vale of tears on the next Sunday, the Festival of the Holy Rosary. But the octave day was the time appointed. On the previous Saturday, October 7th, when Natale visited him, the sick man, stretching out his hands to heaven, exclaimed, as if in an ecstasy, "Oh, Father Rector, do you not see the most Blessed Mother of God entering this chamber with great glory? O blessed, glorious, most beauteous Queen of Heaven! O my Lady! O Sweetness of my heart! Whence is this to me, that Thou shouldest deign to visit me! And what shall I say of Thee, O most lovely Child, sitting enthroned on Her arms, how shall I praise Thy beauty, surpassing all created loveliness?" Many such expressions of supernatural joy and wonder fell from the lips of the dying man, whose face shone with unearthly light, reflected from the vision vouchsafed him. On the Sunday morning he cried out, in a transport of holy joy, "This is the day of gladness in which I shall see GOD!" In the evening at nine o'clock he made his confession once more, then lay awaiting the end, constantly repeating in Latin the words, "Jesu,

esto mihi Jesu!" (Jesus, be to me a Jesus, that is, a Saviour!)

Once the infernal enemy was permitted to disturb this peace by a violent temptation; but while the storm was passing over his head, the dying man fortified himself by the saving Name of Jesus, and by reciting in a whisper one of the psalms, at the same time repelling the tempter by a motion of his hand. Calm was soon restored, and with the Name of Jesus on his lips, he peacefully breathed forth his soul to God before the hour of midnight. As he was clothed with the scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel, and had the greatest devotion to her, his body, according to his own urgent request, was buried in the Church of the Carmelite Fathers in Valencia.

It would be interesting to hear more of the life and virtues of a man thus favoured by God during his last hours. But it was evident that His Divine Majesty intended these wonderful circumstances to display the virtue and power of St. Lewis, for doubtless it was through the merits of the Saint that such unspeakable favours were bestowed upon the dying prince. It was God's will that he should be seized with fatal illness at Torrente, and prepared for death by a marvellous visit to St. Lewis, in order that the virtue of the Saint might be more clearly recognised, and more widely known.\*

Meanwhile St. Lewis was slowly dying. As the long

\* Among the papers of the Prince was found after his death the beautiful prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas, to be recited before a crucifix. "Absorbeat, quæso, Domine Jesu Christe, mentem meam ignita et melliflua vis amoris Tui ab omnibus, quæ sub cælo sunt, ut amore amoris Tui moriar; qui amore amoris mei dignatus es in ligno crucis mori." May the burning force of Thy love, sweet as honey, O Lord Jesus Christ, so possess my mind, I beseech Thee, that it may detach me from all things under heaven, that I may die for the love of Thy love, who for the love of my love didst deign to die on the Wood of the Cross.

expected day approached, the desire of union with God became more intense, while the delay was a grievous penance, the last purification of his soul. His one desire was to die, but even that desire, strongly as it burnt within his soul, was regulated by conformity to God's will. He longed to depart, but at the time appointed by God. On the sixth of October, after confession, he asked what day of the week it was. When told it was Friday, he inquired on what day the Feast of St. Denis would fall. On Monday, they answered. He then counted on his fingers, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, adding with a sigh, "O Blessed God, four days yet to live. May Thy holy will be done!"

The doctors had ordered the Saint to wear a linen garment instead of the woollen one prescribed by rule. He had been unwilling, but had consented, seeing that his Superiors wished him to obey. But now that death was approaching, he earnestly entreated the Fathers to restore to him the proper dress of his Order, and on their complying with his desire, he devoutly kissed the woollen garment before putting it on.

During these last days of his earthly life he constantly suffered excruciating pain; but in this he rejoiced, hoping that it would purify his soul, and render him able to be united more quickly with God. Instead of praying that his pains might be diminished, his desire was exactly expressed by those dying words of St. Pius V., which were quoted above, "Lord, increase my pain, but likewise increase my patience." Amongst other things Lewis suffered intolerable pain in all his bones, as if, as he himself described it, they were all being broken. But his prayer continued as it had ever been for more suffering. In the most terrible paroxysms of agony, they heard him faintly murmuring, "Here cut, here burn, here never spare, so that in Eternity Thou mayest spare!"

He often took in his hand the crucifix that hung round

his neck, pressed it lovingly to his lips, kissing the hands and feet with intense devotion, accompanied with fervent ejaculations. He also had an image of the Blessed Virgin continually before him, often addressing, when the pain somewhat abated, long and ardent colloquies to his beloved Queen and Mother.

Many of these fervent aspirations were overheard by his attendants and those who visited his cell, but unconsciously to himself, for he ever tried to conceal all external signs of his sanctity, lest he might deceive people into imagining him to be holy. Being very deaf, however, he frequently had no idea he was speaking audibly, nor, in fact, that visitors were by his bedside, for he was absorbed in God, attentive only to His Divine Presence.

His friend the Archbishop was a constant visitor until the end; he delighted in staying for hours alone with the holy Father, who spoke more freely to him than to others. On one occasion he asked the Saint whether St. Vincent Ferrer had visited him during this illness. "Once he did," replied Lewis; shortly after he added, "Even now he is standing there," pointing as he spoke with his finger.

This familiarity with his holy patron, St. Vincent, has often been mentioned, and it is not surprising that as death drew near, the Saint should visibly appear. On one occasion long before, when consoling a lady for the loss of her husband, he said, "His soul is already in heaven. Do not doubt it, for St. Vincent Ferrer revealed it to a certain religious, to whom he spoke, just as I am now speaking to you." This "certain religious" was without any question Lewis himself.

Two days before his death, that is on Saturday, October 7, he received the holy Sacrament of Extreme Unction with intense contrition, asking most humble pardon for all his offences. Afterwards his soul remained in perfect calm, the foretaste of everlasting peace.



## CHAPTER III.

### DEATH OF ST. LEWIS.

An Extraordinary Visit—The Mystery Explained—The Death Signal—Revival—To-morrow's Food—Feast of St. Denis—Tunic of St. Dominic—Peaceful Waiting—The Signal again—Entrance into Life—Brilliant Light from the Mouth—Prayers for Eternal Rest—Shining of the Face—The Odour of Sanctity—Music of Heaven—Various Witnesses—Remark of Father Antist.

"Well done, good and faithful servant, because thou hast been faithful over few things, I will place thee over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."—ST. MATTHEW xxv. 21.

"The city hath no need of the sun . . . for the glory of God hath enlightened it."—APOC. xxi. 23.

"And the voice . . . was as the voice of harpers, harping on their harps, and they sung . . . a new canticle."—APOC. xiv. 2, 3.

**O**N Sunday, October 8, the Eve of St. Denis, when the infirmarian first saw the Saint he appeared troubled. With an expression of anxiety and surprise he said, "Father, how is it possible you can allow women to come in here?" The infirmarian appears not to have replied, perhaps thinking the sick man was wandering in mind.

Later in the day when the Archbishop arrived, he asked the Saint on entering how he felt that morning. He answered almost in the same words he had already used to the infirmarian, "How comes it that women are admitted here?"—"Women!" exclaimed the Archbishop, "what women? of whom do you speak, Father?"—"I mean," said Lewis, "those women who came this morning."—"Did

they say anything?"—"Nothing," replied the Saint; "but how did they come to be admitted?"

The Archbishop could not understand what had happened, nor could any of the community enlighten him; but the next day the mystery was explained, for Sister Angela Agullona, a Franciscan nun of distinguished holiness, confided to him that on the Sunday morning she was praying earnestly for Father Lewis, whom she knew to be in a dying state. After conceiving an intense desire in prayer to see him, she felt herself transported into his presence, so that she could kiss his feet. The Prelate immediately remembered what St. Lewis had said the day before, so he asked the nun, whether any words had passed between them. "None whatever," she replied, "but I was allowed quickly to kiss his feet."

In the evening of the same Sunday, the blessed man was seized with a sudden paroxysm that seemed to threaten immediate death; his attendants were so much alarmed, that they sounded the usual signal with a rattle to call the brethren to assist him in his last agony. The whole community gathered at once in the infirmary, and recited the prayers, broken on all sides by sobs and tears of sorrow. Besides the Archbishop of Valencia, another Prelate was present, Michael de Espinosa, Bishop of Morocco.

While all were thus expecting every moment to see the Saint breathe his last, he suddenly revived, when perceiving the religious kneeling around, he said, "They can go for the present; they will be able to return in time." The community therefore retired, while the Archbishop, although he had before resolved to watch all night by the bedside, lest he might be absent at the last moment, felt such confidence in the words of the Saint, that he returned quietly to his palace for the night, being quite convinced that he should find his beloved friend alive the next morning. Not long afterwards one of Lewis' medical attendants, Doctor

Jerome Almenara, came with his son to beg a blessing from the dying Saint. The infirmarian took the opportunity of asking what food he had better prepare for the sick Father for the next day. Lewis overheard the question, and before the doctor could answer, he replied himself, "There will be no need to prepare anything for to-morrow morning."

At last appeared the morn of the Festival of St. Denis, that day of exceeding gladness on which the dawn of the Everlasting Day of uncreated Light was to break on the soul of the Blessed Father. Early on that morning a little incident happened very characteristic of the Saint. Although several days before he had obtained permission to change the linen garment ordered by the doctor for the ordinary woollen one, this morning he imagined that he still wore linen. His eyesight was nearly gone ; moreover, the tunic they had given him was very white as well as unusually soft, so that he mistook it for linen. This troubled him greatly ; he began to weep, begging his brethren, "through the love of God, through the charity and love of Jesus, take away this garment and give me the tunic of St. Dominic, my Father." They endeavoured to convince him he was already wearing the woollen habit, but he was not satisfied till they had taken it off. In a few moments they put on the same tunic, but he was now certain that he was prepared for the last journey in the dress prescribed by rule.

He therefore lay quietly, and in peace, with his crucifix in his hands, frequently shedding tears of love, and kissing the Divine Wounds with such ardent affection, that he seemed to be pouring forth his inmost soul in raptures of love to Jesus Christ.

The Archbishop of Valencia had arrived early in the morning ; while many members of Religious Orders and distinguished persons, seculars as well as ecclesiastics, were also kneeling either in the cell or at least in the infirmary,

all praying for the holy Father. About ten o'clock in the morning the last moment was evidently at hand. Lewis, turning to the Archbishop, whispered, "Help me, for I am dying: read a gospel, and give me your blessing." With many tears the Archbishop read the gospel, making at the same time the holy sign of the Cross on the forehead and head of the dying Saint.

The signal being at once sounded, the community hastened to the infirmary. They recited aloud the Apostles' Creed. All knelt down to say the prayers prescribed for the dying. When they had recited the words, "That being freed from the bonds of the flesh, he may be found worthy to arrive at the glory of the heavenly kingdom, through the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ, who with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth for ever and ever," the blessed soul of St. Lewis, being released from the prison of the body, was conducted by the angels to the throne of Jesus Christ.

He died therefore, as he had so often predicted, on the feast of St. Denis the Martyr, the 9th of October 1581, at ten o'clock in the morning. His labours and penances over, God Himself wiped away the tears of sorrow from his eyes; he entered into his eternal rest.

At the moment in which his soul departed, a brilliant light flashed from his mouth, for a moment illuminating the whole cell with its splendour. The bystanders compared it to lightning, but there was this difference, that instead of dazzling the eyes with its extreme brilliancy, there was an indescribable softness that delighted rather than pained the sight. This phenomenon lasted about the length of time that is needed to recite a "Hail Mary." Amongst many competent witnesses, both secular and religious, who saw this miraculous splendour, the sign of the glory of the departing soul, the following are mentioned by Aviñone. Among the lay people present, Francis Lewis Blanes, a

knight of noble family, and Honophrio Dassio, Sindic of Valencia, both saw the light ; and among the religious the Dominican Fathers, Michael Ferrer, John Martinez, Peter Foix, and Michael Luca, gave the like testimony. Father Jerome Almenara saw a marvellous light in the cell at the same time, but had not seen it proceeding from the mouth. Another intimate friend of the Saint, Mathias Pallas, a Canon of the Cathedral of Valencia, was at the moment of the Saint's departure hastening to the convent, hoping to be present at his death. When crossing the open square in front of the convent, he suddenly saw a light shining with marvellous brilliancy on the roof above the infirmary. On reaching the cell he heard that Lewis had just expired.\*

After mentioning this miraculous light Father Antist adds, " But although from these signs, together with our knowledge of his holy life, we were morally certain of his eternal salvation, . . . remembering how a little before his death he had most humbly begged that all the religious would after his death say six Paters, Aves, and Glorias, that his soul

\* The Auditors of the Rota, in their Report for the Canonisation, discuss the question as to the nature of this miraculous light. That it was no natural light is proved by its issuing from the mouth at the moment of death, also from its not dazzling the eyes in spite of its intense brilliancy. They ask whether it was the " Claritas," that is, the brightness of glory of the beatified soul, or a light similar to that which shone from the face of Moses. (Exodus xxxiv.) They consider it probable that it was the actual splendour of the glorified soul ascending to heaven, revealed to the bystanders for the honour of the Saint. For just as the Apostles were enabled to see at the Transfiguration the glory, supernatural though it was, of the soul of Jesus Christ, clothing even his Body and His very garments with splendour, so could the eyes of those surrounding the Saint be opened to behold the supernatural brightness of the departing soul. The light from the countenance of Moses, and that which tradition says shone always on our Lady's face, was different, being not the actual light of glory, but a kind of splendour bearing a near resemblance to it indeed, but in a soul not yet glorified.

might be delivered from Purgatory, according to the privilege granted to the Orders of St. Dominic and St. Francis, we all fell on our knees and poured forth our poor prayers, so that by this slight service we might fulfil his last request."

Besides the light which issued from that mouth which had ever spoken the praises and defended the truth of God, it pleased His Divine Majesty that the pure body of His Servant should shine with heavenly brightness. The dead face became so bright that the privileged few who surrounded it saw themselves reflected in it as in a perfectly clear mirror.\* How long this supernatural brilliancy lasted is not mentioned, but it filled the souls of those who witnessed it with spiritual joy so overwhelming as almost to cause them to forget, at least for the moment, their own irreparable loss in the glory of him they loved.

This reflection of the light of heaven was not the only miraculous sign of the Saint's holy death. St. Gregory (in his thirty-eighth Homily) remarks, "The fragrance and sweet odour which sometimes proceeds from a dead body is a sign that the Author of Sweetness is present in that body," and St. Lewis literally died in this odour of sanctity. A perfume of astounding sweetness different from, as well as far exceeding in delightful fragrance, any earthly perfume, came from his dead body. This was the more astonishing as he had been so long confined to his bed, and had suffered so much from the ulcer in his leg. Francis Blanes, mentioned above, was the first to notice the sweetness of this supernatural odour. Before departing from the cell, to allow the sacred remains to be arranged for burial, he approached the bed in order to kiss with reverence the feet of his beloved friend. On removing the bedclothes

\* This is attested by the 36th, 37th, 91st, and 244th witnesses in the process of Canonisation. The Bull of Canonisation says, "His dead body shone like pure crystal, so that the bystanders saw their faces reflected as in a most clear mirror."

he was filled with amazement at the perfume he perceived ; at first he thought that some aromatic scent must have been hidden under the clothes to prevent any natural ill odour, but he soon ascertained that this was not the case ; the perfume, moreover, now perceived by others, was unlike anything they had before experienced. Not only the feet, but the face, the hands, and the whole body, even the garments in which the body was clothed, as well as the bedclothes themselves, all gave forth the same marvellous odour, which not only delighted the senses, but filled the soul with spiritual consolation. This heavenly perfume came most strongly from the ulcer which had so long been one of the Saint's most trying bodily crosses.\*

A fourth miraculous manifestation of the sanctity of the departed Father was vouchsafed by the heavenly music which was heard by many in the church where the body was awaiting burial. The first who was favoured by hearing these lovely sounds was brother Antony Ballester, the porter of the church. He was intensely devoted to the Saint, and went to his cell on the morning of his death as often as the duties of his office in the church allowed. He greatly desired to be present when the holy Father departed, but his work detained him in the church, where he heard, at the moment in which the Saint breathed his last, enchanting strains of music, sweeter than any earthly melody. At first he searched for the cause of these delightful sounds, thinking some musicians must have concealed themselves in the church, but soon he perceived that the music was not confined to one spot, but seemed to float about—now near the High Altar, then about the chapel of the Rosary, then as if from the cloister of the convent. This ravishing melody continued for some time,

\* Attested on oath by the 8th, 49th, 106th, and 244th witnesses. Compare St. Thomas, 3, 283, art 5. ad 2.

filling the brother's heart with indescribable joy, so that he felt convinced that he had been permitted to catch a few sounds of the heavenly chants with which the angels welcomed the soul of the departed Saint.

During the evening of the same day, after the sacred body had been carried into the church, and during the funeral service on the following day, many persons heard the same delightful sounds of heavenly music. Some were at first inclined to be shocked that the Fathers should have provided music at so sorrowful a time, but they soon felt convinced that what they heard was supernatural.

A strict examination was made to ascertain whether this music could be accounted for in any natural way, but nothing could be discovered. Moreover, its marvellous sweetness and unearthly character, the fact of its seeming to float about in the air—now here, now there; and lastly, the peculiar feeling of spiritual joy which filled the minds of those who heard it, all point to a supernatural origin.

Magdalen Bonit, a woman of fifty-five years old, was one of those who declared under oath that she heard an indescribably sweet harmony on coming into the church to see the body of St. Lewis. At first, not dreaming of anything extraordinary, she felt vexed and almost scandalised to hear such music when everybody was in tears of sorrow lamenting the loss of the Saint. But finding that others heard nothing, she began with still greater astonishment to examine every part of the church, and to make inquiries everywhere to find from whence this wonderful music came. As she could discover nothing, she began to suspect that the music was not of this earth, but came from the mysterious strings of the angelic harps of those who stand before the throne. (Apoc. v. 8.)

Father Andrew Perez gave a like testimony. On the day of the Saint's death he had retired to his own cell, where his meditations were interrupted by music of wonder-



ful sweetness and beauty, which seemed to come from near the Sacristy. He began at once to search for the cause of these sounds, which seemed at first so much out of harmony with the silence of the convent as well as the grief of the religious, but being unable to discover anything whatever, he concluded that there were musicians collected outside near the river. He sent immediately to inquire who was playing and for what purpose they had collected, but he was assured no music of any kind was being played that day in all Valencia. At last he was obliged to conclude that it was a miraculous sign of the glory of St. Lewis.

Father Michael Sart was favoured by hearing the same; while Father Michael Herrera deposed under oath that he had been delighted beyond measure by hearing a melody in which he could clearly distinguish voices singing, accompanied by instruments of surpassing sweetness, forming together music unlike anything he had heard on earth.

After mentioning this supernatural music, which he does not, however, say that he heard himself, Father Antist makes the following remark, which it will be interesting to translate: "If any one were to ask me how it came about that music so loud as this described was heard only by certain persons and not perceived by others, I should answer by quoting a similar case. I myself, on the Feast of Corpus Christi in 1564, heard heavenly music at Daroca for the space of a whole hour. It happened while I was carrying the most Blessed Sacrament from the street called Luchente to our convent, which is built, I may add, on the same hill and on the very spot where the Hosts of the corporals of Daroca were consecrated. This heavenly music was heard by more than a thousand people, who had collected from various parts to join the solemnity, and yet because some who were present heard it not, they thought the whole idea an effect of imagination. This is related in the special report of the event which was drawn up, both in

the sacristy of our convent and of the Collegiate church of Daroca. But in spite of some not having heard it, I myself, who carried the thurible before the most Holy Sacrament, am certain by the evidence of my own senses that there was no mistake in the matter. Moreover, I consider that it was providentially ordered that all should not hear it, lest men might say that it was merely a natural music, and that players had been hidden behind the oak trees. For this same reason perhaps, some heard not the heavenly music allowed by God, in this case, for the honour of His Servant."

## CHAPTER IV.

### FUNERAL SERVICES.

Gift of Fear—Vision of Angela Agullona—Another Vision—Body of the Saint carried to the Church—Indiscreet Devotion—Body Removed—To Sacristy—To Side Chapel—Guards Arrive—Body in the Church—Cathedral Chapter—Other Choirs—Body in Sacristy—Brightness—Crowd Continues—Portrait of Lewis—Miracles—Body Moves—Cures—Will Found—Requiem Mass—Habit Cut—Hasty Burial—Service by Night—The Vault of Saints—Solemn Requiem.

“With him that feareth the Lord it shall go well in the latter end, and in the day of his death he shall be blessed.”—ECCLUS. i. 13.

“I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God : for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation : and with the robe of justice He hath covered me : as a bridegroom decked with a crown, and as a bride adorned with her jewels.”—ISAIAS lxi. 10.



FROM the whole narrative of his life, it is evident that the holy fear of God formed one of the most striking features of the character of St. Lewis. In a man of less profound humility indeed, so intense a realisation of his own nothingness, and of the awful mystery of God's unsearchable judgments, might have degenerated into a pusillanimous depression and want of confidence, entailing the worst spiritual consequences. But God's graces are duly balanced ; Lewis was too sincerely humble to lack confidence in God's infinite mercy, in that goodness which surpasses all human understanding.

Fear, being in him a gift of the Holy Ghost, purified from

all human passion, became the productive root of true wisdom. But although it was accompanied and tempered with heroic confidence in God, it still produced the profoundest distrust of self, as well as an intense feeling of the nothingness of everything apart from God. After all the wondrous events of his life he sincerely felt himself to be an unprofitable servant. In him therefore were the words of the Holy Ghost fulfilled, "Fear God all the day long, and thou shalt have hope in the latter end."

It therefore pleased Almighty God, who delights to honour the humble, and to raise up those who love the lowest place, to show the eminent holiness of His servant and the glory to which he had risen, by many miraculous signs. Four of these marks of God's favour were spoken of in the last chapter. These were the brilliant light that issued from his mouth as he departed this life; the marvellous shining of his dead body; the perfume which it exhaled; and lastly, the melodious harmony of sweet sounds which floated about the church when the sacred relics lay there exposed. But those signs did not satisfy the goodness of God. It was His will to manifest the glory of His humble servant by direct revelation to many holy souls.

In the first place, before his death, while his soul, not yet glorified, was still imprisoned in his suffering body, Sister Angela Agullona, of the third Order of St. Francis, saw the heavens open over the convent of the Dominicans, and light descending upon the cell in which the holy Father lay dying. The religious to whom this vision was vouchsafed was the same who was miraculously conveyed into St. Lewis's cell in order to kiss his feet.

Another remarkable vision was vouchsafed to a Franciscan Father who would not allow his name to be published. The circumstances of this vision are peculiarly interesting, as the Franciscan religious related the whole to Father Antist, in the presence of Father Jerome Baptist de la

Nuza, afterwards Bishop of Albarazin. At first he had determined to conceal it altogether, but on mentioning it to his confessor, he was ordered to acquaint the Dominican Fathers with the fact. He found himself, however, for several days unable to overcome the repugnance he felt to reveal it, and obtained leave to go to Valencia to consult a religious of the Franciscan convent about the case. This religious was Blessed Nicolas Factor, who appeared to him during sleep on the night before he started to Valencia, directing him to reveal the vision with which he had been favoured to the Dominican Fathers, while at the same time he gave him wise counsel upon a certain other difficulty that perplexed him.

Two days afterwards he called at the convent of St. Dominic, in Valencia, where he related his vision to Father Antist in the presence of Father Jerome Baptist, weeping abundantly as he spoke. It appears that he had long entertained an extreme veneration for Lewis, but only once, when the Saint was the guest of the Archbishop at Codella, had he enjoyed the privilege of speaking to him.

“I was praying fervently for Father Lewis, who, as I had heard, was in a dying state. It was on Sunday the eve of the Feast of St. Denis the Martyr, and I was in the choir after Matins. In the midst of my prayers I saw a church from which darted many rays of extreme brightness, and as, in my vision, I approached nearer, lo ! it appeared to me that the walls of the church were crystal and gold; while in the middle I saw a high tomb covered with silken cloth interwoven with golden threads, and upon it rested the body of Father Lewis Bertrand. Around appeared divers crosses of gold, at the corners stood four religious of venerable aspect, clad in the habit of the Friar Preachers. The two at the head appeared advanced in years, the others standing at the feet were younger; all four shone with marvellous splendour, but in somewhat different ways.

From the brow of the religious standing at the head on the right-hand side, a splendid ray of light shot forth, shining far beyond the limits of the church in which he stood; while a like ray of brightness issued from the one on the left, not however from the forehead but the mouth. Those at the feet also shone with admirable brightness, but the rays came from the extended hands of the one on the right, and from the breast of his companion on the left; while this last also carried a palm branch in his hand.

“Then appeared two choirs of Angels bearing white torches, and as they approached the body in heavenly procession they bowed in reverence before it, singing the while with ravishing melody, ‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, full are the heavens and the earth of Thy glory, Hosanna in the highest!’\* After these angelic choirs came a multitude of men and women singing loudly but with sweetest tones; they all in turn venerated the body and kissed the feet. Then again did the angels take up the harmonious song, ‘Blessed is He who cometh in the Name of the Lord, Hosanna in the highest!’ All then disappearing, the Father returned to the use of his outward senses. In the morning he inquired earnestly about Father Lewis, but could hear nothing of his state till Tuesday. On Friday he obtained permission to go to Valencia to be present at the funeral of the Saint.”

As soon as possible after death the Fathers washed the sacred body, dressing it in the full habit of the Order; then they conveyed it in solemn procession with appro-

\* It would appear most probable that the four Saints were St. Dominic, on the right side of the head, with the ray from the forehead; and opposite, St. Vincent Ferrer the miraculous Preacher, with light issuing from the mouth; at the feet St. Thomas Aquinas, his hands shining on account of the works he had written; and St. Peter Martyr, whose breast was a burning furnace of love, bearing the palm of martyrdom.

priate chant, interrupted by tears, into the public church. The news spreading through the city with surprising rapidity, the church was soon thronged by the people, anxious to see the venerable countenance of the well-beloved Father for the last time, and to beg some favour through his intercession. The instinct of a Catholic people never shows itself more clearly than at the death of a great servant of God when every one endeavours to rival his neighbour in showing honour to his body. And well might they crowd around the bier on which that sacred body lay, motionless indeed in death, but with a sweet joyful look, which made it difficult to turn the eyes away, and filled all the favoured ones who saw it with spiritual joy. At first the people were contented with kissing the hands and feet, placing also their rosaries on the body, but soon devotion grew more bold, and anxious to secure a relic they began to cut the habit in pieces. At last one, more presumptuous than the rest, without any authority or permission, cut off a finger as a relic; then the Prior, fearing lest disorder might ensue or something more disrespectful might happen from ill-regulated devotion, begged the Viceroy to send guards to restrain the people, while in the meantime he had the body removed into the sacristy. At this time the limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh feeling as if alive, although without warmth.

The people murmured loudly at thus being deprived of what they considered a public treasure, so in order to pacify them the Fathers placed the bier in a little chapel divided from the cloister by a wooden screen, and thus some few were able to satisfy their devotion. On the arrival of the guards, with several personages of the highest authority in the city, the body of St. Lewis was once more carried solemnly into the church and deposited near the High Altar. Many religious, supported by the guards, surrounded the bier, but with their utmost endeavour they could scarcely

control the crowds of people whose zeal continued unabated.

The Cathedral chapter, anxious to render public honour to the Saint, came to the church in procession in full choir, and ranging themselves around the bier sung a solemn response for the dead. The example of the Cathedral choir was soon followed by all the twelve parishes of the city as well as by all the religious houses.

The throng in the church becoming every moment more dense, every one pressing towards the altar to obtain a sight of the precious relics, the Prior at last grew so nervous as to the result, that he ordered the body to be conveyed again to the shelter of the sacristy. The fervour of the Faithful was heightened by the favours with which God honoured His servant. The supernatural brightness of the flesh still continued, though it does not appear to have been visible to all. Amongst those who were witnesses of it in the church were Brother Antony Ballester, a lay-brother, and a widow woman named Eugenia Specchio. Moreover, Andrew Armengol, a workman living in Valencia though a native of Morella, declared on oath in the processes, that he elbowed his way with the utmost difficulty through the immense crowd in the church till at last, reaching the sacred body, he knelt with feelings of intense devotion to kiss the hands. To his amazement they shone so brightly that he saw his own face reflected in them quite distinctly. It seemed as if he were kissing a pure unstained mirror.

Raphaella Soler also gave the same testimony. She saw the extraordinary brightness of the body, at the same time feeling a strong desire to venerate it as of a Saint, but was deterred by a scruple lest it might be wrong to do so before the canonisation. Not being able to find her confessor, she returned and again witnessed the same brightness.

After the sacred body had been conveyed the second time to the sacristy, the habit in which it was clothed being cut



almost to pieces by the crowd, some few privileged persons were admitted by the Fathers to venerate it there. Amongst them was the Viceroy with his wife and children, the Duke of Cardona, the Marquis of Comarez, and many other distinguished persons, who were as anxious to see the dead Saint as the common people who filled the church. Nearly all the members of the Royal Council sought admittance into the sacristy.

Impatient murmurs now arising in the church from those unable to enter the sacristy ; the Fathers consulted together as to what course to pursue. It was proposed, after locking the church doors, to expose the body for the veneration of those already in the building. But although it was now two hours since the body had been deposited in the sacristy, the utmost endeavours of the Fathers could not prevent a multitude of persons entering as soon as the doors were again opened to let the people out. Amongst them was the Marchioness of Navarre, with a number of other ladies, while an irrepressible throng of the common people pushed by in their train, in spite of the efforts of the guards to exclude them.

It was now nine in the evening, but still the throng continued. The Fathers were somewhat annoyed, because they were very anxious that an accurate portrait of the Saint should be taken by an artist. At last quiet was restored and the picture successfully taken, a crucifix in the hand, the very one he had held while dying, the eyes cast down, and a scroll coming forth from the mouth with his favourite words, said so often during the last hours, "Lord, here burn, here cut, that Thou mayest spare in eternity."\*

Before daybreak the next morning the approaches to the church were thronged with people, and the doors were obliged to be opened considerably before the usual hour.

\* From this picture the frontispiece of this work is adapted.

The body of St. Lewis had been deposited upon a catafalque covered with silken cloth interwoven with gold, and although it was purposely high, arrangements had been made to enable the people reverently to kiss the hand. Three religious stood near the body to take the rosaries which the devout people desired should touch the relics.

God was pleased to show the sanctity of His servant, as well as to reward the faith and devotion of the people by many remarkable miracles during the time the sacred body remained exposed. A detailed account of these occur in the processes. A few examples depending upon witnesses under oath will be interesting; thus we shall not neglect the admonition of the Archangel Raphael, "Bless ye the Lord, and publish all His wonderful works."

An old man of seventy, named Don John Vivez de Canamas, an intimate friend of the Saint during life, endeavoured to approach sufficiently near to kiss his hand. One of the religious was holding the Saint's hand so that it could be conveniently venerated, but just as Vivez came up, this religious laying the hand on the bier, went away. As Vivez stood watching the beloved face of his friend, Lewis opened his eyes and turned to him, at the same time raising and stretching forth his hand that he might kiss it.

A young girl of twelve was cured of a complaint that had tormented her for several years, on account of which her jaw bone had begun to decay. After extreme difficulty the girl made her way to the bier, where, taking the hand of St. Lewis Bertrand, she made the sign of the cross three times over her face. Her aunt, who was waiting for her at the bottom of the church, for some reason lost her temper and gave the poor child a box on the ear. Blood flowed in consequence from her face, but when the bandages were removed the mischief was entirely cured, the bone restored, and she never suffered from the same distressing malady.

A similar favour was granted to a subdeacon named

Gaspar, forty years old, who had suffered since childhood from a loathsome complaint in the nose, which rendered him unfit for any duties. Three years before the death of St. Lewis, Gaspar had visited him with the hope of being cured, and had tried his utmost to kiss his hand, but as St. Lewis would not suffer him to do so, he had gone away disappointed, attributing this rebuff to his own sins. Now, however, he approached with confidence, exclaiming, "Servant of God, though you refused during life to allow me to kiss your hand, suffer me to do so now; deliver me from the disease that has for so long tormented me." As he kissed the right hand with intense devotion, he was conscious of the sweet perfume emitted from it. Now, as he had entirely lost all sense of smell from his childhood, he recognised this at once as the sign that his prayer was answered. He was entirely relieved from the complaint.

Again, on the very day of Lewis' death, towards the evening, a certain blind man was passing a house from which cries of heart-rending agony came forth, so that the blind man in compassion stopped to inquire the cause. He found that these screams came from the house of a tradesman, named Antony Isola, whose wife had been for some days suffering from agonising pain in the teeth and jaws, and at that moment was running wildly about almost mad with an acute paroxysm of the complaint. The blind man produced a handkerchief which had been used by Saint Lewis, advising the woman to apply it to her face. She obeyed, at the same time praying earnestly, when the pain ceased instantly, not to return.

A favour of another kind was granted to a woman named Euphemia Ayala. She was involved in a lawsuit of the utmost importance to her family, the issue of which entirely depended on finding the will of a certain Angela Serra. The document, however, was not forthcoming, so that Francis Biter, the Notary, after many a careful search, had given

it up as hopelessly lost. Christopher Ayala, the father of Euphemia, was one of those who devoutly kissed the hand of St. Lewis on the day of his funeral, his petition being that the lost will might be found. On his way home he called at the Notary's office, pressing him to search once more for the document; but he declared that it would be utterly useless, in fact, that he could not consent to waste more time over the matter. Christopher thereupon opened the first book he saw lying on the table, where, to the amazement of the Notary, the will was discovered. This might certainly be considered nothing more than an extraordinary coincidence, but the persons interested attributed it to the intercession of the Saint.

Several other remarkable cures are related to have taken place during the period in which the Saint's body was exposed in the church before the funeral; amongst them is the case of a boy of twelve, who was cured at Museros after his father had received a letter from Valencia relating the fact of Saint Lewis's death and the extraordinary course of people to venerate his relics. Others were also relieved of various distressing complaints by kissing the hand or habit, or simply by invoking the intercession of the Saint in the church, but as these closely resemble those above related, differing only in the kind of disease and the names of the sufferers, they do not require more particular mention.

The catafalque on which the body rested before the high altar was purposely made much higher than is usual, in order to protect it from any irreverence, owing to the excitement of the people. Six religious, three on each side, did their utmost to maintain order, and many of the people fastened their rosaries to long wands in order to touch with them the body of the Saint.

During the morning of Tuesday the 10th of October, the solemn Mass of Requiem was sung before a vast con-

course of people, religious and secular, after which the body was lifted from the catafalque to be carried to the tomb. This was the signal for a loud wail of lamentation from the crowd. All their pent-up feelings of sorrow burst forth unrestrained. The solemn funeral chant was interrupted by the weeping and sobbing of the people, each one of whom felt that he had lost a father.

An extraordinary scene then ensued, which could only be excused by the motive from which it arose. The people rushed forward to secure a relic of the beloved Saint, whose body was about to be hidden from their sight. In spite of the united efforts of the religious, and in spite of the hands of many being burnt by the torches, nearly all the habit in which the Saint's body was clothed was cut into shreds, the pieces carried off as relics. In the midst of this confusion, the Patriarch, with tears streaming down his cheeks, devoutly embraced for the last time his beloved friend; then the body was hastily placed in the tomb, which was at once closed by a stone covering. The religious were not even able to observe the prescribed rubrics, being obliged to omit a great portion of the usual funeral service.

During the afternoon and evening a multitude of people continued to flock into the church from the neighbourhood of the city, their disappointment, when they found that the body was already buried, being expressed by loud murmurs. They were obliged to content themselves, however, with kneeling by the tomb to pray, and kissing the stone that covered the grave.

But in the silence of the night the interrupted funeral office was finished by the community, a few special friends being alone admitted into the church. Amongst them was Father Francis Maldonado, the General of the Order of Mercy, and Father Lawrence Zamora, Prior of the Carthusian Monastery of Portacaeli. The stone being removed, four religious entered the vault, where they reve-

rently applied a large number of rosaries, rings, and other objects to the sacred relics. The body was found unchanged, the flesh white as alabaster, the face shining with a peculiar and attractive beauty, while the limbs were perfectly flexible. After the funeral service was concluded, the body enclosed in a wooden coffin was again laid to rest.

The vault in which St. Lewis was thus buried was not the ordinary one for the whole community, but a place under the choir on the right hand side, especially set apart to receive the bodies of religious of distinguished holiness, who had departed with the reputation of sanctity. Here reposed, in a wooden coffin, the body of the venerable Father John Micon; near his head rested the bones of Father Michael of St. Dominic, who it will be remembered, after dying of the plague, had appeared in glory to St. Lewis. The virtues of this Father had been often mentioned in the highest terms by St. Lewis in his Chapter discourses. The same vault contained the relics of the two martyrs, Father Dominic de Monte Mayor and Father Amator D'Espi, as well as of the blessed founder of the convent, Father Michael de Fabra, of holy memory.

Four days afterwards, on the 14th of October, a solemn funeral service was celebrated. The church was so densely thronged that the religious communities had to be conducted through the cloisters into the choir to chant the responsories. The Archbishop of Valencia, having consented to pronounce the funeral oration, all were in expectation that many things not publicly known would be related by so intimate a friend of the Saint. But they were disappointed, for confusion, caused by the immense crowd which thronged the church, prevented the Archbishop from preaching. All the words he could render audible were that, though the Church had not yet pronounced Father Lewis to be a Saint, yet the signs of his

holiness were so many and so unmistakable that nothing was wanting except the ceremony of canonisation. Finding that the confusion in the church continued, he retired without speaking the panegyric he had prepared, to the extreme disappointment of the Dominican community.

## CHAPTER V.

### BLESSED NICOLAS FACTOR.

Blessed Nicolas at the Funeral—Revelation of the Glory of St. Lewis—  
Two Promises—Order of Mercy—Prophecy—Refectory—Appearances  
of St. Lewis to blessed Nicolas—Relic of the Saint.

"He that feareth God shall likewise have good friendship ; because,  
according to him shall his friend be."—ECCLUS. vi. 17.

**T**HE friendship between St. Lewis and blessed Nicolas Factor was only cemented more firmly by death. Father Nicolas was present with the rest of his community at the funeral on the 10th of October, and directly he saw the body of his beloved friend and brother in Christ lying dead before the altar, he fell prostrate before him, kissing his feet again and again, crying out, "Pray for us, O blessed Lewis Bertrand!"

After the funeral service was over, and the sacred body removed from his sight, God refreshed his spirit by a vision of the glory into which his departed friend had entered. He was still in the Dominican convent in one of the cells, when he was carried away in ecstasy, remaining in that wonderful state for an hour and a half. Many of the Dominican religious being witnesses of this rapture, heard the wonderful words he uttered about St. Lewis, speaking sometimes in Spanish, sometimes in Latin. The Father General of the Order of Mercy was also present, as well as the Prior of the Augustinians, and other religious. In this ecstatic state, blessed Nicolas said, among other



things," Oh! St. Lewis, beloved of God and man, now dost thou see God face to face. No sadness any longer abides in thee. Already has it been said unto thee, Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. With rejoicing did the angels receive thee, when thou didst enter heaven; joyfully did they greet thee saying, Friend, go up higher. The same was said to thee by the Archangels, Principalities, Powers, Virtues, Denominations, yea, even by the very Cherubim. 'And he ascended upon the Cherubim, and he flew upon the wings of the winds' (Ps. xvii. 11). The Cherubim have admitted thee into their choir, together with St. Dominic, St. Francis, and St. Vincent Ferrer. There thou art, all burning with the love of God; in His sight thou art blessed! Now of a surety thou knowest on which side lies the truth in that discussion between St. Thomas and Scotus, as to whether beatitude essentially consists in seeing God or in loving Him, a matter of which we poor mortals are ignorant. Now thou singest with David, 'As we heard, so have we seen, in the city of our God.' Thou art in heaven, immersed in the joyful abyss of the divine Essence, like a fish in the waters of the mighty sea. Now is that word of the Canticle fulfilled in thee, 'He has brought me into the cellar of wine' (Cant. ii. 4).

"Oh, how like art thou unto blessed Jordan, who at different times gave the habit of religion to a thousand novices, for thou also hast admitted so many who are now and will continue to be the glory of thy Order. Hereafter thy name will not be Friar Lewis, but St. Lewis. St. Dominic, pray for me! St. Peter Martyr, pray for me! St. Antoninus, pray for me! St. Thomas, pray for me! My master, St. Vincent Ferrer, pray for me! St. Lewis Bertrand, pray for me!

"Rightly didst thou say to me, that thou wouldst never again preach, since thou hast gone to heaven with the other Saints. Thy vestments were to-day carried off piecemeal by the faithful, what then remains for thy brethren? For

them there remains thy humility and thy good example ! Oh how great was thy humility ! When I was told I could see thee lying ill in thy cell, I confessed my sins before venturing into thy presence ; but thou, my beloved friend, didst beg of me to read a gospel over thee and to pray for thee, when thou, who art truly a Saint, ought to have prayed for me !

“Remember that during thy life thou didst promise me two things,—one thou hast fulfilled, the other still remains. St. Lewis, every promise is a debt. Just men perform what they promise, I therefore firmly trust that thou wilt do according to thy word.

“Oh how I rejoice ! Rightly did St. Paul say, ‘Rejoice always in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice.’ But to moderate the excess of that joy, the same Apostle added, ‘Let your modesty be known to all men.’”

In these words, which among others fell from the lips of blessed Nicolas in his prolonged ecstasy, it will be noticed that he mentions two things promised him by St. Lewis. What were these two promises ? As far as can be ascertained St. Lewis had promised to reveal to him whether he himself had entered into glory after his death ; secondly, to reveal to blessed Nicolas the state in which he was before God, and whether he would be saved. The first request God allowed to be granted by the vision of St. Lewis on his entrance into heaven, ascending through the different choirs of the blessed spirits until the Cherubim received him into their ranks ; the second petition it seems likely was also answered, and that before the end of the ecstasy, blessed Nicolas had received the assurance of his own everlasting happiness. This, it appears probable, was the cause of that superabundant joy which his words expressed at the end of the ecstasy.

Blessed Nicolas, addressing the General of the Order of Mercy, exclaimed, “O Father General, this was a Friar indeed. And think you not that in your own Order there

are in divers places holy religious, yea verily; and this Order, since St. Raymund of Pennafort founded it to redeem captives, ought in an especial manner to imitate Christ, the Redeemer of the whole human race, of Whom St. Paul says in his Epistle to the Ephesians, 'For His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us.'” The holy man repeated the word *exceeding* several times, dwelling upon it with great emphasis. “This Order, therefore,” he continued, “is obliged to perform works of extreme charity, for the Fathers have to remain as redeemers in place of the captives in Algeria, that thus they may redeem them from bondage.”

After this, blessed Nicolas cast his eyes on a certain Dominican Father present, to whom, after gazing at him intently, he said, “Brother, hold yourself prepared, for before long you will die.” There was no apparent reason why this Father should be considered near death, but he was the first in the community to be called away, dying in July of the year following.

As blessed Nicolas passed the chapel which had formerly been the cell of St. Vincent Ferrer, he cried out with great devotion, “Oh! if God would give me this favour that I might soon come into this house to die, that my body might be buried in this cell near the altar, where St. Vincent so often prayed, and St. Lewis so often celebrated Mass.”

When the Fathers urged him to come to the refectory, for it was now three in the afternoon, he exclaimed, “What food can you give me which will equal that which my brother St. Lewis has given me?”

When he had at last reached the refectory, he pointed to the tables standing across the top on the left hand, and exclaimed, “Why ask me to eat? Only suffer me to sit down in that place in which God once favoured me so highly.” He alluded in these words to a vision that had been vouchsafed to him on one occasion in that refectory. He had seen St. Dominic and St. Vincent Ferrer, as if

presiding when the community were seated at table, thus showing how holy a place even the refectory of a religious house is, when all is done for God's glory,—recollection and mortification being the guests. After blessed Nicolas had called this vision to his remembrance, he was carried out of himself once more in rapture, and said wonderful things touching the glory of St. Lewis Bertrand.

After he had returned home to his own convent outside Valencia, he was so intensely affected by what he had seen, that for three or four days he could scarcely be persuaded to take the slightest nourishment. If food was mentioned, he pretended to think that the spiritual feast given to him by St. Lewis was meant.

With his true Franciscan simplicity he would prostrate himself before the blessed Sacrament, lovingly complaining to our Lord: "Behold, Lord, all Thy love and all Thy favours are for Thy servant Lewis, for Thy poor brother Nicolas is nothing left?"

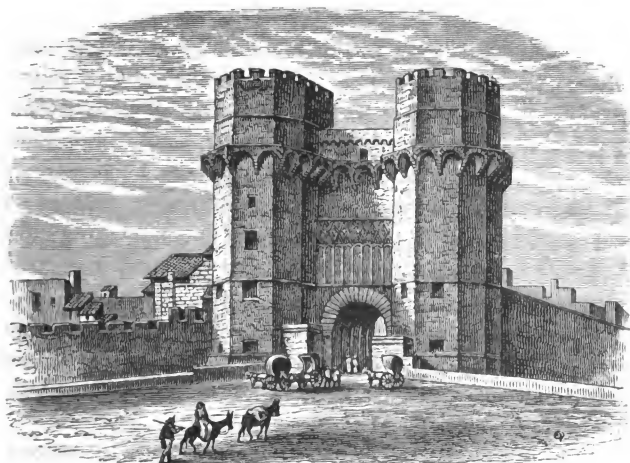
As long as he lived it was his custom to invoke St. Lewis, in the Litany of the Saints, among the other holy confessors. As a relic of his beloved friend, whom he now honoured as a heavenly patron, he preserved with extreme veneration an image that had been used by St. Lewis, and was found among other things in his cell. In preaching he often mentioned St. Lewis, holding up his life for the imitation of all as a sublime example of Christian and religious perfection.

Blessed Nicolas was on more than one occasion favoured by a vision of St. Lewis in the glory of heaven. One day he remained in a state of ecstatic prayer for a long time after celebrating the Holy Sacrifice, and then exclaimed in a rapture of holy joy, "I have seen my Father St. Francis with my Father St. Dominic, between them that blessed Father Lewis Bertrand! Although we do not all wear the same habit, are we not still all brethren in the Lord?"

Again, one evening blessed Nicolas had visited the church of St. Dominic, when suddenly interrupting his prayer he attracted the attention of one of the religious by whispering, "Don't you see any one there?" pointing with his finger towards the high altar, "Don't you see him?" "Whom do you mean, Father?" replied the religious, seeing no one. "My friend, my friend," murmured blessed Nicolas. By this name he was understood to mean St. Lewis.

When blessed Nicholas was in his last illness, he was visited one day by the Superior of the Dominican convent, accompanied by Father Dominic Anadon. Knowing what pleasure it would afford the dying Saint, they had brought with them the finger of St. Lewis which had been taken from his body by Father Antist before his first burial. Blessed Nicolas kissed the sacred relic with the utmost devotion several times, touching with it his face and neck, exclaiming, O St. Lewis! St. Lewis! He declared several times that during his illness he had been visited by Saint Dominic and Saint Vincent Ferrer, St. Lewis accompanying them to console him in his sufferings.

Lastly, blessed Nicolas composed for his own devotion a commemoration of St. Lewis, which he constantly used, and he asserted in a letter to a friend in high position in Valencia, that, through the intercession of his beloved St. Lewis Bertrand, a very special favour had been bestowed upon him by Almighty God.



GATE OF SERRANOS. VALENCIA.

## CHAPTER VI.

### TRANSLATION OF THE BODY.—1582.

Crowds at the Tomb—Translation to Special Shrine—Shrine opened Again  
—Relics Secured—Cure by their Application—Incorruption—Conclusion of Father Antist.

“He was a man born prince of his brethren, the support of his family, the ruler of his brethren, the stay of the people; and his bones were visited, and after death they prophesied.”—ECCLUS. xlix. 17.

**I**T has already been related how the venerable body of St. Lewis had been buried beneath the Choir of the religious in the “Vault of the Holy.” The miraculous favours which were so abundantly accorded to those who invoked his intercession kept alive the devotion of the people, who flocked in daily increasing numbers to venerate the sacred relics, as well as to offer thanksgiving for favours received. The devout pilgrims soon began to

feel discontented with the humble position of the holy body, while, at the same time, the religious suffered considerable inconvenience from the concourse of people visiting the tomb, thus disturbing the choir services. For some time it was felt by all that a change was necessary, so that when John Bertrand, the Saint's brother, offered to erect a suitable shrine of stone fashioned after the model of a small chapel, the community were delighted to accept the proposal.

After the permission of the Archbishop had been duly obtained, it was determined that a translation of the sacred relics should take place on the Festival of the Annunciation 1582, five months after the death of St. Lewis.

The religious desired to effect this translation in private, to avoid the confusion of the immense concourse of people that a public ceremony would attract. Only a few persons of high rank or special friends of the convent were to be informed. But as often happens where a secret is known to many, and excites interest in all, the report began to be spread in the city, and as the impression was that the ceremony would take place at night, the church was crowded on the evening of the vigil of the Annunciation. The Prior therefore determined to postpone the translation till the middle of the day, especially as the Archbishop, being indisposed, could not be present. The people, therefore, went away disappointed, and not much pleased at the reticence of the Fathers.

On the 25th, in the middle of the day, the Archbishop, with the Bishop of Morocco, was seen entering the convent, while at the same time it was noticed that the wife of the Viceroy, with a small number of distinguished visitors, was admitted into the church. This was enough to betray the secret, so that in an incredibly short time such a crowd collected, that although the church doors were secured as quickly as possible, as many as fifty were already inside,

among them many grantees as well as religious of different Orders.

The sepulchre was then opened. All crowded round to endeavour to see the sacred body, while the Provincial, Father John Loares, the Prior, Father Francis Aleman, and Father John Vitali, with Father Vincent Justinian Antist, went down into the vault. It will be remembered that the body of the holy man had been enclosed in a wooden coffin, which was now opened that the state of the sacred remains might be examined. No process of embalming had been employed, the body having been buried exactly in its natural state. It was found now to be unchanged and completely incorrupt. All who were present clearly recognised this at once, and it was the more remarkable, as the vault was exceedingly damp. The sight was so affecting that many could not restrain their tears; while everybody present was eager to secure the privilege of kissing the feet and hands, of touching the sacred remains with Rosaries and other objects of devotion. The Patriarch, who had venerated St. Lewis so profoundly during his life, now devoutly kissed the feet of the body which appeared rather sleeping than dead. The sacred body was then carried to the new sepulchre prepared for its reception. An odour of exceeding sweetness was perceived to issue from the tomb.

The religious were anxious to terminate the ceremony as speedily as possible, fearing lest the impulsive devotion of some one present should prompt him to cut some relic from the venerated body. Two fingers had been actually carried off without permission during the funeral in the church, though the Provincial, discovering the thief, obliged him to restore the stolen treasure.

In the hurry and confusion that resulted from every one striving to kiss the sacred feet, the stone that closed the tomb was placed over it in the wrong way, so that next



day it was again removed. On this occasion, more than two hundred people being present, the same scene took place when the tranquil form of the Saint was again visible. All were deeply affected. The Prior, vested in a cope of cloth of gold, with attendant ministers and acolytes, intoned solemnly the hymn of St. Dominic, sung at the vespers of his feast, "*Gaude Mater Ecclesia, lætam agens memoriam, quæ novæ Proles gaudia, mittis ad cæli curiam.*" The organ with the whole choir of the religious continued the hymn, intending, by thus singing in honour of St. Dominic, to celebrate the praises of his recently departed son, who had so closely imitated his virtues. Meanwhile all who were present devoutly kissed the hand of St. Lewis. After the last verse of the hymn had been chanted, the prayer of St. Dominic was sung, then the holy body was once more laid to rest in the stone shrine, where it remained for many years undisturbed, with eleven silver lamps hanging before it burning night and day in honour of the humble Saint.

It has been already mentioned that two of the fingers of one hand had been taken as relics, though afterwards recovered by the Father Provincial; it was perceived before the holy body was buried for the last time, that the little finger of the same hand was nearly separated, seeming to hang on the hand merely by a tendon. The Provincial, therefore, anxious to have a relic preserved in the convent, ordered Father Antist to separate this little finger, and to enclose it in a silver reliquary. While obeying this command Father Antist was informed that a lady named Isabella de Eseriva was so dangerously ill, that the doctors could give no hope of her recovery, death appearing imminent. Father Antist immediately carried the relic he had just secured to the sick lady's house, placing it, in a spirit of faith, upon her head with fervent prayers. A sudden change followed. The dangerous symptoms quickly dis-

appeared, while in a few days the lady was able to leave her sick-bed and to return thanks to St. Lewis for her recovery.

This relic being afterwards preserved in the convent with the utmost veneration, God was pleased to grant many miraculous cures by its application to the sick. Of the other two fingers, one was presented by the Provincial to His Eminence Cardinal Alexandrino, nephew of St. Pius V. The second was divided. One part was given to the Prior of Valencia, the other to the intimate friend and future biographer of the Saint, Father Vincent Antist. The good Father, however, did not retain this treasure long in his own possession, but dividing it into two parts, he bestowed one upon the Infanta Isabella of Austria, daughter of Philip II., when she visited Valencia in 1586; with the other part he enriched another lady, Donna Guiomar de Moncada, daughter of the Marchioness of Ayton, who valued it far more highly than a present of the most splendid diamonds. The habits that had been worn by the Saint, the wooden coffin, also, in which the body had first reposed, were preserved as precious relics, and many heavenly favours rewarded the faith of those who possessed them, or used them with reverence.

Father Antist records a remarkable fact, which certainly tends to establish the miraculous character of the integrity of the sacred body of St. Lewis at the period of this translation. He tells us that on the morning of the ceremony, that is, the 25th of March 1582, the Father Provincial and Father John Vitale, remained in the vault under the choir in which the body first reposed for upwards of half an hour, engaged in taking off the habit in which St. Lewis had been buried. This habit, it will be remembered, had been cut almost into rags by the people during the funeral service, from their eager desire to secure some relic of the Saint. After divesting the sacred body of this habit the

Fathers proceeded to put on a clean new habit. During all this operation, which involved of course much movement of the body, not the slightest sign of corruption was perceived, either in the body itself which was entire, though, as already said, not embalmed, or about the clothes and surroundings. The lacerated garments remained in the vault during the time of the translation of the relics, but when the Fathers went to secure them afterwards as relics, they were astonished to find them now in a state of evident corruption as they would have been in the ordinary course of nature, if they had clothed a dead body for some months. This manifestly proved that the perfect freedom from all natural decay in a body buried for five months in a vault dripping with damp, could not be explained by the action of any natural cause, but implied a distinct and evident miracle. The Bull of Canonisation expressly mentions this circumstance as a miraculous favour. How can we indeed fail to recognise this fact as a divine witness that Lewis participated in an unusual and extraordinary manner in the sanctity of Him, who is the Head and Life of all Saints, of whom it is written, "Thou wilt not give Thy Holy One to see corruption" (Ps. xv. 10).

The conclusion of Father Antist is worth translating, as it reveals in a beautiful manner the simple sincerity of his soul: "I warn those who were witnesses of this miraculous preservation, as also those who saw the splendour of his dead face, those moreover who heard the heavenly music, and indeed all to whom any extraordinary proof of the sanctity of this holy man has been vouchsafed, not on that account to prefer themselves before others, for the fact that some experience these things, while others do not, does not argue greater merit, but is simply an effect of God's almighty will. On the contrary, far from allowing these favours to puff them up with pride, they should strive to imitate the humility, patience, penance, and angelic chastity

of this servant of God, lest those awful words of Christ might be applied to them, 'Woe to thee, Corozain, woe to thee, Bethsaida, for if in Tyre and Sidon had been wrought the mighty works which have been wrought in you, they would have done penance long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes' " (St. Luke x. 13).

## CHAPTER VII.

### MIRACLES AFTER DEATH.

Immense Numbers—Apparitions of the Saint : to a Hermit, an Irish Hermit in 1804, in the Poor Clares' Infirmary, to a Knight—Bad Confessions—Deliverance from Prison—The Fountain—Philip III. cured by a Relic—Visiting the Shrine—Dead Child Restored—Cures in Valencia—In other Places—Miracles—God's Seal.

"No word could overcome him, and after death his body prophesied. In his life he did great wonders, and in death he wrought miracles,"—*ECCCLUS.* xlviii. 14, 15.

**F**ATHER AVIÑONE, the promotor of the cause of the canonisation of St. Lewis, devotes a whole book, consisting of twelve chapters, to an enumeration of the heavenly favours granted to those devout to the Saint, and designed by Almighty God to glorify His servant by affording supernatural proof of his sanctity. These miraculous favours must not be passed over without notice, while at the same time a detailed account of them would occupy too much space, and as it would involve considerable repetition, one cure so much resembling another, the description would necessarily become somewhat tedious and monotonous.

The first class of these supernatural favours consists in apparitions of the Saint in glory after his death. No doubt it is often difficult to prove satisfactorily the reality of visions; the whole evidence must, generally, from the very nature of the case, proceed from one source, the

person to whom they were granted. Even when the person who declares that a vision has been vouchsafed to him is not only above all suspicion of deceit, but is also acknowledged to be of thoroughly accurate judgment, it is difficult to distinguish whether what was seen arose from the natural imaginative power, or from some external and supernatural cause. Sometimes, however, the vision is corroborated by some external circumstance which carries conviction, as for example, when the person learns accurately from a vision something impossible to be known by natural means, or where a cure is promised in a vision, and afterwards occurs as foretold. Sometimes also the holiness of the person, and the enlightenment of their souls, is so great, as in the case of canonised Saints, that they can themselves recognise a supernatural action on their souls.

It matters little, on the other hand, in deciding the truth of a vision, whether there is a real objective presence of the person or thing seen, or whether by supernatural action, without any object being represented to the eye, a clear and definite impression is left on the mind. Indeed, the more exalted kind of vision is that in which the bodily eye has no part, but where the vision is an intellectual impression from a supernatural cause. The whole difficulty resides in the one point of knowing with certainty that this supernatural agency is really exercised, and that the vision is not merely the action of a pious and lively imagination.

The first example narrated of an apparition of St. Lewis is corroborated by an external cure, as well as by the character of the person to whom it was vouchsafed. A hermit named Michael Pons, who lived near Cullera, a town by the seashore in the neighbourhood of Valencia, having known the Saint rather familiarly during his life, had ever entertained feelings of deep veneration for his sanctity. He was afflicted with a fever which prevented him from being present, as

he earnestly desired, when the Saint passed away to his rest. As he was tossing about on his bed in restless suffering he exclaimed, "Oh, holy Father Lewis Bertrand, if I only had been in health, I should have had the privilege of seeing thee die!" To his astonishment he saw a venerable figure enter his cell with a companion. He at once recognised the Saint, who saluted him with the words, "What ails you, Brother Michael? Be of good cheer, no evil will befall you." He then formed the sacred sign of the cross on his fevered brow. Forthwith the fever left him, and he rose perfectly well. In answer to a question as to who his companion was, St. Lewis answered that it was Father John Micon, after which both disappeared, leaving the hermit full of wonder as well as most grateful for restored health. In this case the immediate conclusion of many people would be that the appearance of St. Lewis was nothing more than a vivid dream of the hermit's feverish imagination, inflamed by thinking so much of the Saint's death. Without the cure it would not be easy to prove the reality of the vision; but we may safely assert that the effect of feverish dreams is not the immediate permanent cure of the patient.\*

Another very remarkable vision, with circumstances strongly confirming its reality, occurred in the infirmary of the Poor Clares at Gandia, on St. Valentine's day, February

\* This is not the first mention of a hermit in the life of St. Lewis. There were, in fact, many hermitages scattered about the hillsides, often inhabited by men of distinguished holiness. The hermitages, a traveller in Spain tells us, were generally small huts built of clay or bark covered with esparto grass or palms. A garden surrounds the hut, provided generally with a clear spring of water, and planted with carob, fig, orange, or almond trees. In 1804 a hermitage near Benidorm, on the sea-coast, was inhabited by an old Irish sailor, who for twenty-five years never descended from the rock on which his hut stood. He acted as a kind of watchman, and on account of his great experience in the course of the tunnies, the fishermen venerated him as a kind of oracle, supplying him, in reward for his information, with abundant provisions.

14, 1582. Sister Margaret being in a dying state, the Mother Abbess ordered all the Community to offer for her a sung Mass in honour of Father Lewis Bertrand. During the Mass, Sister Jane of the Cross left the choir to visit the infirmary, exhorting the dying Sister Margaret to invoke St. Lewis with confidence. Sister Margaret calmly replied, "Blessed Bertrand is now here." Hearing this, Sister Mary Anne, who had been bedridden for some time suffering acutely in her arm, which was going to be amputated, cried out, "Here! where is he, Sister?" "On that seat," replied Sister Margaret. "Oh!" replied Sister Mary Anne, "why does he not obtain my cure, since I have invoked him so often!" Sister Margaret answered, "He is even now making the sign of the cross towards you and the other sick Sisters, giving you all his blessing; you will all be cured; but for myself, I have begged for the salvation of my soul, not for the life of the body." Sister Mary Anne inquired how old the Saint appeared, and what garments he wore. To this Sister Margaret replied, "He does not appear to be very old, his hair is not entirely white; he is dressed in black and white." This happened at about eight in the morning, and half an hour afterwards Sister Margaret calmly expired, while the other Sisters suddenly began to recover, and Sister Mary Anne's arm, instead of being amputated, became perfectly well. Evidence under oath was taken of these facts in the Processes.

On the 5th of February 1582, a knight of Valencia, named William Raymund Catalano, was visited on his deathbed several times by St. Lewis, who sometimes appeared with the Blessed Queen of Heaven herself, as well as with St. Dominic and St. Vincent Ferrer. The sick man had many relics of the Saint, for on his head he wore a cap that had been used by St. Lewis; round his neck hung a rosary, while under his pillow was a belt, both of which had belonged to the Saint. On one occasion he declared



that certain saints recited by his bedside the Litany of the Saints, St. Vincent and St. Lewis acting as Cantors, inserting the names of several not canonised, especially Father Dominic of Monte Mayor, Father Amator D'Espi, and the holy Pontiff Pius V., afterwards canonised by Clement XI. On the day before his death St. Lewis with St. Vincent again appeared, as the bystanders understood by his gestures, for he was unable then to speak. His son, Father Vincent Catalano, a Dominican, fearing that his father might be deluded by an evil spirit, recited the words of the gospel, "The Word was made flesh," whereupon the dying man, before unable to speak, said with distinct tones, "And dwelt amongst us; and we saw His glory, the glory as it were of the Only-Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Being admonished to add, "Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God, have mercy on us," he replied, "It is enough, my son, there is no need of so many words;" meaning that the vision was evidently from God. He declared that the Saints invited him to accompany them, but that the many fervent prayers offered for him detained him. This gentleman had gone to St. Lewis four days before the Saint's death, to beg his blessing; Lewis had then said to him, "Go in the peace of God, I will remember you."

One more case of a different type may be interesting. A lady of rank had fallen into the miserable gulf of sacrilegious confessions, having concealed a grave sin she had committed. The chain of sin seemed to bind her so closely that deliverance appeared impossible; for eighteen long years she remained thus in the slavery of the devil. But God did not even then desert her, for in His Infinite Wisdom He determined that her conversion should promote the honour of His faithful servant Lewis. Hearing of the marvellous miracles worked through his intercession, the poor lady began to implore his assistance, to

obtain for her the grace to make a good confession. She was not herself an inhabitant of Valencia, but resided in another part of Spain, yet the fame of St. Lewis had reached her ears. While in this state she fell seriously ill, and God in His mercy vouchsafed her an extraordinary favour. St. Lewis appeared to her in sleep pointing out to her a certain religious in the Dominican habit, who, said the apparition, though he belonged to the convent of Valencia, would shortly pass that way on a journey. "Look at him attentively," said the Saint, "for to him you will be able to confess." On the next day a religious arriving at the convent of the Order in the town in which this lady resided, was asked by a Father to accompany him as he was going to visit the dying lady. She was astonished when she saw him, recognising him at once as the religious that Lewis had shown her; but when she heard that he had arrived from Valencia, she became certain that this was the religious indicated by the Saint. She determined to go to confession, which she did with many signs of contrition, thanking God for the mercy granted through His servant.

During the year following his death St. Lewis also delivered a man out of a very terrible prison, where he was chained in a damp cell with no bed whereon to rest his aching limbs. His imprisonment was unjust, the result of private animosity. The poor sufferer, having known Lewis, had on some occasion done him a service, so that knowing the Saints are grateful, he invoked his assistance, reminding him of the slight obligation he was under. After praying earnestly to our Lady and St. Lewis, he fell asleep exhausted, when it appeared to him that his wretched cell was visited by the Blessed Mother of God, with St. Lewis. He endeavoured to rise in order to prostrate before the heavenly visitors, when the vision ceased, but lo! the heavy chain with which he had been bound had fallen from

his limbs. Shortly afterwards he was liberated by another judge, the one who had unjustly persecuted him receiving just punishment.

These are some few examples selected from many similar cases in which people of various conditions and suffering in different ways were favoured with a vision of St. Lewis, sometimes alone, often in company with other Saints. The details are recorded in the Processes.

Numerous instances of miraculous interposition for the cure of various ailments resulted also from the use of the water from the fountain which, as has been before described, St. Lewis blessed not long before his death.

A considerable number of favours were also proved during the processes to have resulted from the simple invocation of St. Lewis; as an instance may be mentioned the case of Lewis Esalva, a Grandee of the kingdom of Valencia, who received a serious injury from unskilful bleeding. His arm had swollen very seriously, in fact the pain was so intense that no sleep had visited him for two or three nights, while the slightest linen bandage was intolerable. These symptoms were quickly alleviated, and the cure before long was complete by the simple invocation of St. Lewis.

Some instances have been already noticed of cures wrought through the devout application of relics of St. Lewis, to which many more might be added. Amongst others Philip III. received a favour of this nature. Having laboured under a certain infirmity from his birth, his father, Philip II., had made him wear a white scapular on which a palm was embroidered in honour of St. Peter Martyr, a special patron of youth. When King Philip II. visited Valencia in 1586, the first church he entered, after the Cathedral, was that of the Dominican Fathers, where he sought at once the tomb of St. Lewis to beg the holy Father's intercession. Father Vincent Antist was at that

time prior of the convent, and at the king's request he had a small scapular made out of one St. Lewis had worn, for the use of the young prince. After a time he sent the prince another. When he had worn it for a time, the infirmity under which he laboured disappeared. Out of gratitude, after he became king, he sent urgent letters on several occasions to the Pope, petitioning for the canonisation of St. Lewis. The blind saw, the deaf heard, fevers fled away, all kinds of diseases disappeared from the virtue of these sacred relics, when applied with faith accompanied with earnest prayer.

Those also who visited the shrine of the Saint experienced very remarkable favours, as an example of which may be mentioned the case of Gaspar Ramirez, a working man of Valencia, who was cured of blindness when seven years old by a novena of visits to the tomb where the sacred body reposed.

Even the dead were restored to life by the power of the Saint's intercession. In Xativa, a little boy after a severe illness was at the point of death. His mother watched him expire. All the usual signs of death were present. She then in an agony of grief fell prostrate to implore the help of St. Lewis to whom she had been to confession during the Lent he had preached in the Cathedral. "O Father Lewis," the poor woman exclaimed in her agony, "help me; I implore you to restore my child to me!" For a quarter of an hour she thus cried out in the anguish of her broken heart, when her husband, after trying to comfort her, looked at the bed where the dead body of the little boy was stretched. To his astonishment he saw motion, then the pallid cheeks became red, in fact the child was discovered to be not alive only, but cured and in good health. The parents made a pilgrimage to the tomb at Valencia, leaving their votive offerings in gratitude. The boy was still living in 1596.

Again, in the year 1647, John Baptist Ramirez had moved from Valencia to Chelva from fear of the plague which had broken out in the city. His little son, only three years old, being attacked with a violent fever, died. The father and mother possessed an image of St. Lewis, which with great faith they placed on the dead body of their child, at the same time pouring forth the most fervent supplications for the assistance of the Saint. The child had been dead two hours, but as they persevered in prayer their lively faith was rewarded by his opening his eyes and asking for food. He was perfectly recovered. Here, if death cannot be positively proved to have supervened, the child being at least at the very point of death was restored suddenly to health by the power of prayer.

One chapter of Father Aviñone's life is occupied by a lengthy list of miraculous cures wrought through the intercession of St. Lewis in various parts of the kingdom of Valencia. Another chapter relates those vouchsafed to the lively faith of various sufferers in other kingdoms, so that we may apply to St. Lewis the words written by St. Bernard of another Saint, "He is glorified on the sea, praised on the land, and invoked in dangers of every description."

Miracles are not necessary for sanctity. None are recorded, for instance, of St. John Baptist, at least during his life on earth. But miracles, though not an essential characteristic of saints, form the seal of sanctity, a divine seal impressed by the Hand of God Himself. They are narrated not for our imitation, for few have the gift of miracles, but they are useful because they fill the soul with confidence, and infuse great spiritual joy into the hearts of the faithful at the thought of the power of the saints who, reigning already with Christ, share as members of that everlasting kingdom in the plenitude of His Almighty power. May we, who now praise Him as wonderful in His

saints, participate one day through His mercy in the glory of the kingdom of the saints.

The honour thus shown by Almighty God Himself to the inanimate body of His servant impresses us strongly with a sense of the reverence due to our own living bodies, the tabernacles of our immortal souls, the very "Temples of the Holy Ghost." How deeply we ought to respect the bodies "so wonderfully made" which God has given us, when He shows, by the miracles He is pleased to work, that He regards even the dead bodies of His Saints, waiting for the Resurrection, as heavenly shrines. Of the Bodies of the Saints, Cardinal Newman writes in the following beautiful lines :


" ' The Fathers are in dust, yet live to God : '  
    So says the Truth ; as if the motionless clay  
    Still held the seeds of life beneath the sod,  
    Smouldering and struggling till the Judgment-Day :  
" And hence we learn with reverence to esteem  
    Of those frail houses, though the grave confines ;  
    Sophist may urge his cunning tests, and deem  
    That they are earth ;—but they are heavenly shrines."

## CHAPTER VIII.

### CANONISATION OF ST. LEWIS.

High Standard of Canonisation—Petition from Valencia, 1581—Sixtus V. orders Examination—Report—Rapid Succession—Clement VIII. issues Letters—Special Process—Report—Paul V. beatifies Lewis, 1608—The Archbishop's Fund—Cause before the Auditors of the Rota—Fourteen Congregations—Gregory XV. orders a Re-examination—The Sacred Congregation in 1621 reports Favourably—Delay of forty-eight Years—Canonisation by Clement X. in 1671—Slowness of Decision.

"Wisdom is the brightness of eternal light, and the unspotted mirror of God's majesty, and the Image of His goodness."—WISDOM vii. 26.

HE canonisation by the consent of the popular voice is a speedy process. Masses of people whether for good or evil are generally impulsive, and we have seen in the case of St. Lewis how no sooner had he departed to our Lord, than the united testimony of all classes of men declared him a Saint. An enthusiastic cultus was forthwith commenced. He was canonised by acclamation.

But the solemn canonisation by the supreme authority of the Holy See marches at much slower pace. It is as slow and deliberate as the other is quick and impulsive. Being perpetual, the Church can afford to wait, while a calm and unimpassioned step accords well with the majesty of an infallible judgment. It was not until 1671 that Clement X. gave, under the seal of the Fisherman, the Bull declaring Blessed Lewis Bertrand to be a Saint.

Before that solemn act of the infallible judge many processes were conducted, many searching inquiries made, and many earnest petitions drawn up. A bare enumeration of these various steps would give most conclusive evidence of the extreme prudence which characterises the action of the Church in canonisations. Every event in the life of the servant of God becomes the subject of the most patient investigation. Every possible difficulty raised by the ingenuity of the Promotor of the Faith, popularly called the "Devil's Advocate," must be clearly and satisfactorily explained. No corner is left in the dark. The light of the most diligent scrutiny must be thrown upon every doubtful matter, while the slightest defect in virtue clearly and unanswerably proved, would suffice to stop the cause; preventing the servant of God, illustrious for holiness as he might still be, from being raised to the altars of the Church. It must be conclusively proved that he possessed the virtues of the Christian life, faith, hope, and charity with the four cardinal virtues, not only to a great but to an eminent and heroic degree, this moreover not merely from time to time, in special acts, or at particular moments, but habitually, in adversity and prosperity, in honour and dishonour, in sickness and in health, in action and in suffering, in life and in death. His virtues must also have the divine testimony of clearly ascertained miracles, so that it may be manifest that God, by His unerring judgment, sanctions the fallacious opinion of men. These miracles, moreover, must not depend on popular report, but must be established on the evidence precise and consistent of eyewitnesses examined with the utmost care under oath.

The work was commenced in the month following the death of St. Lewis, that is, in November 1581. In the course of that month the magistrates of Valencia considered it their duty to take measures to preserve a faithful record of the wonders of God's grace in their holy fellow-citizen.



They therefore drew up a formal petition to the illustrious Archbishop of Valencia, John de Ribera, praying him to establish a process to examine into the life and virtues of Father Lewis Bertrand. The Archbishop willingly consented, entrusting the matter to the care of the Bishop of Morocco, Michael Espinosa, who, presiding at the commission, commenced the investigation on the 14th of December 1581, examining before its close one hundred and twelve witnesses.

This did not, however, satisfy the zeal of the magistrates, or, as we should probably style a similar body, the civic Council of Valencia. In 1584 they addressed a humble petition to the Supreme Pontiff Gregory XIII., praying his Holiness to constitute a process by Apostolic authority, that all the necessary steps might be taken to introduce the cause of canonisation. In order that the affair might be conducted with energy they appointed Father John Bru de la Modelana, of the Order of St Dominic, and Doctor John Baptist Vives, who resided in Rome, to undertake the business. Gregory XIII. was favourably disposed to allow the introduction of the cause; but he died in April 1585, so that he had no opportunity of adopting any measures.

Sixtus V. was elected in the same month. In the October following, Philip II. of Spain wrote an urgent letter to his ambassador at the Pontifical Court, enjoining him to petition the holy Father to institute the necessary inquiries without delay, "that the joy the city of Valencia had already received from the memorable actions of so holy a religious might be made full." The Spanish ambassador obeyed the wishes of the king, and in consequence of his earnest petition Sixtus V., in a secret consistory held on the 25th of January 1586, commanded that the cause should be introduced, committing the affair to seven cardinals, presided over by the Dean of the sacred college, that after careful examination of the case they might report to the Holy See.

In July of the same year 1586, the Pontiff, after receiving the report of the committee of cardinals, issued a Brief addressed to the Archbishop of Valencia, appointing him with two bishops as a commission to inquire in general into the life, purity of faith, religious holiness and miracles of the servant of God, Friar Lewis Bertrand. This general inquiry is the first step required by the rules of the Holy See in these causes.

When the Papal Brief arrived in Valencia, it was taken to the Archbishop by Father Vincent Antist, as Prior of the convent of St. Dominic, and it must have afforded the most lively pleasure to so intimate a friend of St. Lewis to be the official bearer of such a document.

In obedience to this Brief, the Archbishop, with his two episcopal assistants, opened the general process on the 8th of October 1586, just five years after the Saint's death. Ninety witnesses were examined, including men of all positions, of every rank and degree, both laymen and ecclesiastics, who had personally known the servant of God.

This process was despatched to Sixtus V., who committed it for examination to the recently established congregation of Rites by a Brief, dated July 15, 1589.

In August 1589 the Procurator General of the Dominican Order and Father John Bru, the Procurator for the city of Valencia, petitioned the congregation of Rites to examine the general process made in Valencia. After all due formalities the sacred congregation reported to the Pope, in a secret consistory at St. Peter's on the 9th of March 1590, that the process had been duly examined, and petitioned the Holy See to issue remissorial letters commanding the special process to be commenced.

The death of Sixtus V., on the 27th of August 1590, delayed the proceedings for a time; but on the 21st of September in that year, Philip II. again wrote to his am-

bassador at Rome to press forward the cause after the election of the new Pope.

But in spite of the urgent request of the king the affair could make no progress owing to the rapid deaths of successive Popes. Urban VII. succeeded Sixtus V. ; but he was elected on the 15th of September 1590, and died only a few days afterwards, on the 23rd of September. Gregory XIV., elected on the 5th of December 1590, only lived till the 15th of October of the following year ; after him came Innocent IX. on the 30th of January 1592, who only survived till the end of next March. When Clement VIII. was elected, the arrears of business were so numerous that the remissorial letters commanding the special process, appointing the judges and the questions to be asked each witness, were not despatched till the 16th of March 1596. They were entrusted to a merchant having an agency in Valencia, who bound himself under oath to have them securely conveyed.

The letters having arrived safely in Valencia, the Syndic of the city, who happened at that time to be James Bertrand, the Saint's Brother, accompanied Father Vincent Antist to the Archbishop, and with all proper formalities delivered them to him, to the great satisfaction of the entire city.

The special process which was immediately opened continued until the 2nd of December 1598, during which period two hundred and ninety-one witnesses were examined. In the remissorial letters from Rome the sacred congregation had ordered that in the processes should be included all the proofs and documents relating to the cause of the servant of God. The Procurator of the cause therefore brought to the Archbishop, on the 25th of April 1596, various informations gathered in different places in which St. Lewis had lived and preached.

The processes concluded, signed and sealed with legal precision, were despatched to Rome on the 10th of May

1599. At the same time the city of Valencia appointed Father Lewis Ystella, a learned religious professor in the University of Valencia, to represent the city in Rome, entrusting to him public money voted in order to meet the necessary expenses. He was also the bearer of a letter from King Philip III., who as already related had received a special favour through the Saint's intercession, in which letter the king humbly prayed His Holiness, Clement VIII., to canonise St. Lewis. By the same messenger many other letters from persons of distinction were sent to the Holy See for the same purpose, among them one from the Viceroy of Valencia, the Duke of Nagara.

When Philip III. understood that the canonisation of the Saint would certainly be deferred for a considerable time, according to the established usage in matters of such importance, he determined to petition for the beatification, in order that public veneration of the servant of God, with permission for the Office and Mass in his honour, might be authorised. The monarch also wrote to the Cardinal Prefect of the sacred congregation of Rites, supplicating him to obtain this favour from the Apostolic See.

On the 4th of March 1608 the sacred congregation of Rites, after due deliberation, declared that the Supreme Pontiff, if it seemed good to him, had sufficient grounds to enrol the servant of God among the Blessed, to allow him that title with the privilege of an Office and Mass, as for a confessor, and lastly, that in the opinion of the congregation there was nothing to impede the progress of the cause of canonisation.

Paul V. was now the reigning Pontiff. On the 29th of June 1608, he issued a Brief declaring Father Lewis Bertrand to be one of the Blessed, conceding at the same time to all the convents of his Order in the kingdom of Valencia the privilege of Mass and Office in his honour. This privilege was afterwards extended to the whole Order, together with the clergy of Valencia.

When the intelligence of the beatification reached Valencia, great and general were the rejoicings. The whole city celebrated the festivity, as if the honour of the Saint were a personal triumph to each citizen.

The Archbishop, remembering the close friendship which had united him to Lewis, bestowed a sum of money on the convent of Valencia, to form a fund to supply everything necessary to celebrate the yearly festival of the Blessed Father in his own convent with all suitable magnificence.

Now that the beatification was accomplished, the convent of St. Dominic at Valencia was anxious to make renewed efforts to procure for Lewis the still higher honour of solemn canonisation. Father Ystella, the Master of the Apostolic Palace, Procurator of the cause for the convent, had died, so that the Prior, with the consent of the community, appointed Father John Baptist Alzamora to undertake the business in Rome. He was elected to perform this duty on the 4th of February 1615, and in October of the same year he arrived in Rome, immediately petitioning the Holy See to commit the cause to three auditors of the Rota, that they might examine the processes.

The Pope having granted the request, on the 27th of April 1617 the preliminary arrangements were commenced. The first care of the Procurator of the cause was to order three copies of the process to be written; some idea of the labour of the business and the minuteness of the examination may be formed from the fact that each copy contained 1545 pages.

Each of the three senior auditors of the Rota, who had been constituted judges in the cause, were furnished with a copy of the processes after they had been compared together and their identity established. At this juncture the Procurator of the cause, Father John Baptist Alzamora, died. Nothing could therefore proceed before the General

of the Order had written to the convent of Valencia to command the Fathers to send another religious to Rome to fill the vacancy. Father Bartholomew Aviñone was appointed on the 6th of October 1617, and arrived in Rome on the 28th of December of the same year.

He set to work without delay. On the 30th of April 1618, the first congregation was held in the Apostolic Palace of the Quirinal, in which it was decreed that the process could proceed in due form. The second congregation assembled in the sacristy of the Church of St. Augustine on the 17th of July 1618, when it was decided that the witnesses in the processes had been duly examined. On the 18th of September in the same year it was concluded in the third congregation, meeting in the same place, that the eminent faith, most firm hope, and most ardent charity of Blessed Lewis had been abundantly proved. The fourth congregation was convened in the same place on the 26th of September in the same year, when all the judges agreed that ample evidence had been provided to establish the heroic nature of the prudence, justice, poverty, chastity, prayer and patience of the servant of God. A like favourable conclusion was arrived at in the fifth congregation sitting at the Quirinal on the 5th of October 1618, concerning the heroic temperance, mortification, and humility of Blessed Lewis. At the same time it was also declared to be clearly proved, that God had bestowed upon him the gift of prophecy. Also it was proved that there had been a wonderful gathering of the people at his funeral, all anxious to kiss his feet or hands, to cut relics from his habit, and afterwards to visit his tomb. This was an evidence of the universal opinion that existed of his sanctity. On the 15th of October 1618, another congregation met in the Quirinal, when it was decided that sufficient evidence had been adduced to establish two miracles wrought by Blessed Lewis. The first was the extinguishing the fire in

the vineyards at Albayda by the sign of the cross, the second the cure of Sperantia Assensi.\*

In the seventh congregation, appointed for the 18th of February 1619 in the Quirinal, the judges considered two other miracles sufficiently proved, namely, the multiplication of the bread in the convent of St. Onuphrius, described in chapter i., Part III., and the cure of Vincent Morelli by the application of a relic of the Blessed, the cure of terrible and inveterate ulcers in this case being instantaneous.

The eighth congregation, in the same palace on the 4th of March 1619, approved three more miracles as satisfying the strict rules laid down in the case of canonisation. The first was the supernatural light at the moment of death, the second the music of the angels after his departure, the third the instantaneous cure of Isabella Salon by laying his hand upon her. On the 20th of March 1619, in the ninth congregation in the Quirinal, the evidence for the miraculous cure of two boys was declared sufficient. Both were cured immediately by drinking some of the water of the fountain blessed by St. Lewis. In the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth meetings in the Quirinal, other miracles were approved.

The meeting of the congregation of the 12th of July 1619, resulted in the approbation as certainly proved of two supernatural events. The first was the wonderful brightness with which the face of the body shone resplendent when lying in the church before burial, the second the perfume exhaled from the body after death.

Lastly, the fourteenth congregation held in the Sapienza, on the 31st of July 1619, examined the evidence adduced in the processes for three miraculous cures, which the judges decided met the requirements for canonisation. First, the case of Isabella Pugiades, who was perfectly

\* These miracles have been described in chapter xi. of Part I., and chapter iv. of Part III.

cured by the mere application of the rosary of the Saint, when she was nearly dead from fever and deprived of the use of speech ; second, the case of Andrea Alreus, wonderfully cured by visiting the sacred tomb ; and third, the cure of Jeronima Giner, who being afflicted with terrible ulcers in the head, was entirely relieved after being anointed with some of the oil from one of the lamps burning before the shrine.

After the election of Gregory XV. the auditors of the Rota drew up and signed an elaborate report of the inquiries that had been made, presenting it to the Pope at the Quirinal on August 13, 1621.

It would certainly appear as if all possible care had now been taken to arrive at the truth, and to render it prudent to proceed at once to the solemn canonisation. But the Pope was not even yet satisfied ; so that in September 1621 he commanded the sacred congregation to enter upon another detailed examination of the whole cause, appointing Cardinal Pignatelli to preside over the inquiry. The cardinals, therefore, in many meetings of the congregation, after examining laboriously and accurately the whole mass of evidence, at last pronounced unanimously that the processes were valid, that the virtues had been shown to be heroic, that the requisite number of miracles were sufficiently proved, thus confirming the judgment of the auditors of the Rota.

Finally, on the 22nd of December 1621, the cause was concluded by a decree of the sacred congregation, declaring that the Supreme Pontiff, whenever it appeared good to him, could safely pronounce that the Blessed Father was one of the Saints reigning with God, and could propose him for the worship and veneration of the faithful.

Philip III. did not live to see this decree for which he had so often earnestly petitioned. He died in March 1621. His son Philip IV., having inherited his father's



devotion to St. Lewis, wrote fervent appeals to Gregory XV. to proceed at once to the canonisation in December 1621 and in January 1623.

Gregory XV. died in 1623, on the 8th of July, and the solemn canonisation of St. Lewis was still delayed for forty-eight years. Four more Pontiffs intervened before Clement X., on the 12th of April 1671, issued the Bull of Canonisation.

This chapter, describing the various stages of the cause of canonisation, is a condensed account of one whole book of Avignon's life. It might simply have been stated in two lines, that after due deliberation the Holy See beatified Lewis in 1608, and canonised him in 1671; but the above details are instructive, and will not be found uninteresting, as affording evidence of the wonderful prudence of the Holy See in conferring the supreme honour of canonisation on a Christian hero, and proposing him as an example to the faithful, as well as an object of their veneration. The decision of the Pope in such a matter is infallible; therefore, in making it, he is guided by the Holy Spirit, for it would be a palpable error to imagine that the supreme authority of God's Church could declare a man to be reigning with God as a Saint, if after all his life had been displeasing to the Divine Majesty. If the Church is infallible in moral as well as dogmatic teaching, it is evident she cannot mislead the faithful by proposing as a model of heroic sanctity a man unworthy of that honour. But the Holy See considers it prudent to spare no labour to arrive at the truth by human knowledge, thus not tempting God by any rashness or presumption, but doing everything possible to form a prudent judgment, then trusting in the Divine Guidance when pronouncing the final decision.

The Church, being perpetual and unchanging amidst all human vicissitudes, never hurries, is never impelled by feeling, never suffers human impetuosity to hasten its action.

It is always deliberate, cautious, grave. The Pope, raised on the watch-tower of Israel, above the restless activity of the multitude, can see afar off with calm undisturbed vision. Popes die, but the Church is immortal, so she can afford to wait.

In this characteristic of deliberate action, as in so many ways, the Church reflects the image of her Founder. Who is slower in action than GOD Himself? Man hurries because his life is but for a day, but God is eternal, and therefore He hastens not. Man is restless and changeable, God is immutably calm. How often therefore is man tempted to be impatient because God delays!

But when the appointed time has arrived, suddenly God strikes the decisive blow, from which there is no appeal. However long He has appeared to wait, when He does act, it is decisive, final, irreparable. What appears slow to our finite minds, springs from His consciousness of infinite wisdom and power.


So in its measure with the Church. She, also conscious of her immortality and of the ever-abiding guidance of God, is slow and deliberate in a way that is often a trial to human impetuosity. Monarchs and princes may send earnest petitions, whole countries may be in feverish anxiety to attain some desired end, the canonisation of a Saint, the definition of a doctrine, the decision of some controversy, but in the midst of all the excitement the Holy See proceeds calmly and majestically forward. But at last when the due season has arrived, the sentence is definite and clear, with the unerring decision of infallible judgment.

## CHAPTER IX.

### HISTORY OF THE SHRINE.

Translation in 1647—Incorruption in 1661—Translation in 1744—Description of Shrine in 1789—Desecration in siege by the French, 1811—Vincent Marques shelters the Relics—Conveyed to sacristy of Cathedral—Translation to St. Dominic's in 1814—Desolation in 1830—Translation to Church of St. Stephen—Procession in 1850.

"And some cast the body into the sepulchre of Eliseus. And when it had touched the bones of Eliseus, the man came to life, and stood upon his feet."—4 KINGS xiii. 21.

T now only remains to trace the history of the incorrupt body which reposes still in Valencia, waiting for the glorious resurrection to be again united to the pure soul already reigning with the Seraphs.

The translation of the sacred relics from the vault under the choir to the stone sepulchre erected by the Saint's brother, has been already described. Father Antist and Father Aviñone both tell us that no one, up to the time they wrote, had been allowed to inspect it, but that when the stone was fastened over it in 1582, it was completely incorrupt.

Aviñone wrote in 1622, but after that date, in 1647, there was another translation of the holy body from the stone sarcophagus to a more costly and precious shrine. It was then declared to be incorrupt, and in 1661 the sacred congregation ordered that a careful examination should be made, in order to ascertain whether it still remained free

from natural alteration. The result of this examination is given in the following words of the Bull of Clement X. The Holy Father mentions as one of the miracles established as happening after the Saint had been declared blessed, the fact "of the sacred body remaining incorrupt for nearly eighty years after its burial, although it had not been embowelled or in any way embalmed against decay. Nevertheless, when it was transferred in 1647 to a more precious shrine, and in 1661 when it was examined by the judges commissioned by the Holy See, it was discovered to be still entire, untouched by decay, the flesh and joints pliable and free from the stiffness of death."

In the year 1744 the Marchioness of Trocifal, Maria de Bracomonte, built a special chapel in honour of St. Lewis, which the civic Council of Valencia, writing to the Bollandist Fathers, describes as magnificent. In this chapel a silver shrine was erected in which the sacred body, still incorrupt, was honourably deposited over the altar to receive the veneration of the faithful. An engraving of this shrine is given by the Bollandists, who received it from the civic authorities of Valencia, to illustrate the life of St. Lewis. Rich and costly as it was, its artistic merit may certainly be questioned, although in accordance with the taste prevailing in the middle of the last century.

In the latest volume of the new edition of the Bollandists, some further details of interest are given. The chapel erected by the munificence of the good Marchioness in 1744, is thus described in a book of Travels in Spain, by Antony Ponz, in 1789. "The Chapel of St. Lewis Bertrand," he writes, "is enriched with jasper and precious gems. Nor would anything be wanting in its beauty, if all the decorations were as good in their kind as the pictures on the walls by Jerome Espinosa, representing various scenes in the life of St. Lewis. The picture of the Saint above the altar is a work of the same artist. It is attached

to the altar, and in front of the shrine where the body reposes, in a rich silver urn." The vaulted roof of the chapel was frescoed by Rovira. Within the precincts of this chapel Ponz also found monuments erected in honour of the venerable Father Dominic Amadon and of Father John Micon.

But the endless changes of earthly affairs did not suffer the body of St. Lewis to repose undisturbed. At the beginning of this century the wave of the revolutionary wars reached the walls of Valencia, and the fertile plain of the Huerta was trampled under foot by contending armies.

The precise date at which the repose of the sacred remains was disturbed does not very clearly appear. In an official document drawn up in 1814, duly signed by a public notary, it is declared that there existed then in the archives of the diocese, written evidence that the body which had been concealed in the house of Don Vincent Marques, and was conveyed from there to the sacristy of the cathedral in January of the year 1812, was the body of St. Lewis Bertrand : but when it had been found necessary to remove it from the Dominican church is not mentioned. We are only told that it happened on account of the attack of the French army, and the words "*urna dirupta*" indicate violence having occurred.

There were three distinct sieges of Valencia by the French army, two of them unsuccessful, and the last ending in the capture of the city. The first occasion was in 1808, when Marshal Moncey, under command from Napoleon, marched from Madrid in the early part of the summer, to suppress the insurrection against his authority in Valencia. The inhabitants of the city, nothing daunted by the eight thousand men arrayed before their walls, defended themselves with such intrepid valour that the French general was obliged to retreat with severe loss.

The second attack on the city happened two years after,

in 1810, when Marshal Suchet entered the province with a considerable army, and marched without opposition to the very gates of the city. He had been induced to suppose that the Valencians, alarmed at his very approach, would capitulate at once, but the result proved that he had undervalued their courage. The gates remained closed, and as he had not provided artillery sufficiently powerful for a siege, he was obliged to retire after a few days.

In 1812 he was more fortunate, and gained from Napoleon the title of Duke of Albufera, with large estates in the province, by the capture of the city after a most obstinate resistance and a display of desperate valour by the defenders under Blake. "The rich and beautiful plain of Valencia," writes Alison concerning this siege, "the garden of Spain, the scene which poetic rapture sought in vain to enhance, with its immense resources, fell entirely under the French power."

It must have been during this last siege that the body of the Saint was disturbed. It appears to have been exposed for veneration, during the troubles of the city, on the high altar of the Dominican church, and to have suffered violence from the soldiers during the sack of the city. It was then concealed in the private oratory of Vincent Marques, and on the 29th of January 1812 it was secretly conveyed to the cathedral, being deposited with other precious relics in the sacristy. As the final capitulation of the Spanish army defending Valencia took place on January 11, the sacred deposit remained for a little over a fortnight under the hospitable roof of Vincent Marques.

In 1814 the Dominican religious once more received the treasure into their own keeping. On this occasion the translation was public and solemn. The procession formed in the cathedral on the morning of the 23rd of October, the chapter, the clergy, secular and regular of the city, and the civil authorities taking part in the solemnity, together

with an immense crowd of people of all classes. The sacred body was elevated on the shoulders of eight priests who had been selected for the honour of bearing it during the ceremony. With solemn chant and waving censers, all bearing lighted candles, the body of the humble servant of God was borne through the door of the Apostles, through the streets of the city dressed in festive costume, with lights in the windows, reaching at last the Plaza de Santo Domingo; then the procession entered through the main door of the convent into the cloister, and thus to the church. After depositing the body for a time at the high altar while antiphons and prayers were chanted, the procession moved down the church to the chapel of St. Lewis, where the shrine for the reception of the relics had been prepared.

At this time the integrity of the sacred body had been somewhat impaired by the lapse of time and the frequent removals, especially the hurried concealment in the house of Vincent Marques, after suffering some violence in the church. The fingers had become detached, and the two lower bones between the elbow and the hand were broken off on the left side, and one of them on the other arm. These larger bones were replaced as carefully as possible, the bones of the fingers being deposited in a covered vessel, after being properly authenticated, that they might be venerated with the rest of the body.

When the sacred body had been placed in the chapel of St. Lewis, on a table prepared for its reception covered with damask cloth and fine linen, the proper official documents were drawn up, stating that it was the identical body carried from the house of Marques to the cathedral, and also that the Prior, with the community, having now received the treasure again into their church, bestowed a relic from the fingers of the Saint upon the Cathedral chapter, in acknowledgment of their solicitude in preserving and watching over the body during the troublous times.

After these formalities the Vicar General, Antony Roca y Pertusa, gave orders that the sacred remains should be at once deposited in the shrine over the altar. Amidst solemn chant and prayer, it was reverently lifted up by four Dominican Fathers in the presence of all the officials, ecclesiastics and laymen, amongst others of the knights of the cell of St. Lewis, and placed in the wooden shrine prepared over the altar for its reception. This shrine was decorated on the outside with silver work, and the inside was lined with rich silk.

There were two glass coverings, framed in wood covered with silver and firmly secured. Over these glass lids at the head and foot of the shrine two wooden panels were fixed, secured at the upper part by iron fastenings inserted into the border of the shrine ; at the lower extremity by two locks, so managed that they required two keys to be used together in order to open either.

When all had been thus safely secured, one of the keys was given to the custody of the Viceroy, the other was handed to the Prior of the Dominican convent.

In this shrine, poor indeed compared to the more ancient one, but still in his own church and in the old chapel dedicated in his honour, the relics of St. Lewis lay undisturbed till the dissolution of the religious houses in 1830, when the convent of St. Dominic saw the termination of its long and eventful history, the religious were all expelled from its venerable walls, and its fine old Gothic cloisters fell into ruin. The church, in which for so many centuries the praises of the eternal God had been faithfully sung, was closed ; the lamp of the sanctuary was quenched, the voice of praise was unheard in the holy place.

For some time the body of St. Lewis remained over the altar, but no devout worshippers knelt before the shrine to beg his intercession. The doors were closed. The parish priest and clergy of the church of St. Stephen, therefore,



made an earnest petition to the Archbishop to allow them to remove the venerable remains of the Saint into their church, to receive the honour which was its due. St. Stephen's church appeared to have more claim to the possession of this treasure than any other church, for two reasons ; first, because the Dominican convent was situated within the precincts of the parish ; secondly, because at the font of that church, three hundred and nine years before, St. Lewis had received baptism.

The Archbishop granted the petition. This last translation took place on the 14th of October 1835 ; the shrine containing the body being removed from the mournful silence of the deserted Dominican church, and deposited over the altar in the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament in St. Stephen's.

Only one fact remains to be recorded. In 1850, when the country was suffering from considerable drought, the Archbishop allowed the sacred shrine containing the relics to be carried in solemn procession to implore God to send down rain to refresh the parched ground, through the intercession of that Saint who had been so faithful a servant of the Divine Majesty.

Still does the incorrupt body repose over the altar of the Blessed Sacrament in the ancient church of St. Stephen. Those knees so often bent in honour of the mystery of the altar, that head that was so often prostrate in the dust to adore the hidden Presence, now repose waiting for the resurrection, close to the living body of Him who said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." Fit resting-place for a heart that so tenderly loved Jesus Christ !

## APPENDIX.



### A.

*Note to Chapter IV., Part I., page 26.*

#### THE CONVENT OF ST. DOMINIC, VALENCIA.

THIS convent is thus described in the travels of M. le C<sup>te</sup>. Alexandre de Laborde. His book, embellished with magnificent engravings, is found in the King's library, in the British Museum, and is entitled "*Itinéraire descriptif de l' Espagne.*" It was published in the early part of the present century. From engravings in his work the three woodcuts in the present volume have been taken.

"The front of the convent, simple but pleasing, is of brick, painted white. The portal leads to a vestibule, supported by several columns, through which we go to the cloister. This is handsome, spacious, and roofed with a lofty vault, supported by a multiplicity of little crossed arches, in the Gothic style, and in fine taste. There are fourteen chapels in two of its sides; one of the other sides is ornamented with two altars. There are a great many paintings here, some of real merit. . . From this cloister we go into a gallery, the walls of which, to the height of six feet, are covered with painted tiles made at Valencia, representing the lives of St. Vincent Ferrer and St. Lewis Bertrand; the upper part, as well as the vestibule, is ornamented throughout with portraits, as large as life, of the members of the Order of St. Dominic who had risen to the rank of Bishop, Cardinal, or Pope.

"The front of the church is beside that of the convent: it has no ornament but that of the portal, composed of two stories of architecture: the first is of the Doric order; the second is in Attic ornamented with pilasters, and three statues of saints in niches.

"At one end of this front there is a very high tower with a terrace at the top surrounded by a balustrade: from this terrace a second tower rises, ornamented with two Doric columns: a third tower rises above the second with columns of the same order, and terminates with a lantern turret finely executed. This tower is one of the handsomest pieces of architecture in Valencia. The interior of the church is spacious and without aisles. . . In the chapels there are some good pictures by different masters.

"The chapel of St. Lewis Bertrand is richly decorated with panels and pilasters of white and green marbles, and with pictures representing divers events in the life of St. Lewis Bertrand by Jerome Espinosa. Behind the chief altar there is a *camarin*, a kind of large oratory, where the body of the Saint is kept in a silver shrine: here also are several paintings by Hippolitus Bovira. . . The chapel also contains the monuments of two religious of this convent, Juan Micon and Dominic Anadon Loskis; they are of white marble with columns of green. . . On each side of the main body of the church there are two chapels of such extraordinary size, that they look like two distinct churches; the one, under the invocation of our Lady of the Rosary, is overcharged with gilding. The other, of St. Vincent Ferrer, is preceded by the little chapel de los Reyes, founded by Alphonso V., King of Aragon, built in the Gothic style with striking simplicity. . . This secondary chapel leads to that of St. Vincent Ferrer, which occupies half the length, and is but lately built. In this we meet with a luxurious display of marble of every kind, a pleasing collection of good paintings, and a noble and striking magnificence which do honour to those who directed the work."

Mr. Richard Ford, F.S.A., the writer in Murray's "Guide to Spain," mentions the convent of St. Dominic at Valencia "as a Museum of art of all kinds till desolated by Suchet, who bombarded Valencia on this side. Once it was *the* lion of Valencia. The chapter-house and cloisters are in excellent Gothic, the latter planted with orange trees."

It is interesting to know that in the Cathedral of Valencia there are three altar coverings, and a very rich pulpit covering purchased in London by two Valencian merchants when the Catholic ornaments of St. Paul's were sold by command of Henry VIII. They are exquisitely worked in gold and silver, representing various subjects in the Life of Christ, especially the Crucifixion. Among the subjects are turrets which may easily be recognised as taken from the Tower of London.

## B.

*Note to Chapter VI., Part II., page 212.*

The prayer that St. Lewis, in imitation of St. Vincent Ferrer, generally used in visiting the sick, and by which so many were healed, was as follows. While reciting it his hands were laid on the head of the sick person :—

“These signs shall follow them that believe. They shall lay their hands upon the sick, and they shall be well. Jesus the Son of Mary, the Salvation and Lord of the world, Who drew thee to the Catholic Faith, may He preserve thee in it and make thee blessed ; and by the merits of the Blessed Virgin Mary, of St. Dominic our Father, of St. Vincent, and of all the Saints, may He deign to deliver thee from this infirmity.”

Then follows the first part of the first chapter of the Gospel of St. John, as it is read at the end of Mass.

*Lastly this blessing :—*

“May our Lord Jesus Christ be with thee, that He may defend thee ; may He be within thee, that He may preserve thee ; may He go before thee, that He may lead thee ; may He go after thee, that He may keep thee ; may He be over thee, that He may bless thee : Who with the Father and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth in perfect unity for ever and ever. Amen. May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, come down upon thee and remain with thee for ever. Amen.”



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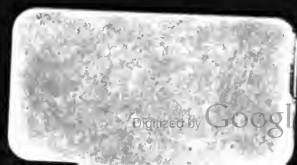
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